BAPTISM AND CONFIRMATION

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BAPTISM AND CONFIRMATION

BY

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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

THE name of the author of this volume is sufficient guarantee of its excellence. He is an eminent professor at the Catholic Institute in Paris. To the whole of Europe he is known as the Editor of the *Dictionnaire Apologétique de la Foi Catholique*. He has written such scholarly works as: *La Théologie de Tertullien, La Théologie de Saint Hippolyte*, and *L'Édit de Calliste*.

We feel sure that there is a large public anxious to avail themselves of books of first-class apologetics so long as they are easily available and of reasonable compass. The members of the Catholic Evidence Guild and students at our Secondary Schools will doubtless welcome the series to which this book belongs.

The Appendix has been translated by my friend, W. A. Cummins, Esq., B.A., to whom I wish to tender acknowledgement and thanks.

JOSEPH HOWARD.

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BAPTISM AND CONFIRMATION

CHAPTER I

THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

I. *The Sacraments*

Positive religions, which offer to man a definite system of beliefs and rites as the summary of the homage due to the divinity, cannot dispense with special rites of consecration for the enrolling of a new adherent. The Christian religion is not an exception to this law found in all religions in the course of history, for, even if it were not the only divine religion, it is sufficiently marked out as the most human of all by every one of its characteristics. Whoever enters it has to be impressed with a seal. And the seal of the initiation of a Christian is not an empty sham or a mere convention. The Church of Christ has always presented it as a reality, which is great from the point of view of its origin, remarkable for the duties it imposes, and powerful by reason of the gifts it confers. It is a sign which is authentically divine, which the Church tells us she has not invented, but which she received from her

Founder. It is full of heavenly power as the efficacious pledge of an irrevocable alliance between God and His people.

According to the mind of the first centuries the complete rite of Christian initiation was made up of three distinct rites: Baptism, the gift of the Holy Spirit, and the Eucharistic Communion. But in the case of the Eucharist, since it could be received over and over again, it was always there for the faithful to receive as their spiritual food all their life long. As regards the gift of the Holy Spirit, it could be received but once, but it was not given as essential for salvation. Only in the case of Baptism was fully realized the type of a rite of initiation; no one could receive it more than once, and without receiving it no one could be called a Christian. Theology, now fully developed, distinguishes three sacraments of initiation. This idea of a sacrament is a technical one which we must make clear at the outset if we wish to thoroughly understand the economy of salvation in the Church of Christ.

Sacrament—oath: two translations of one and the same Latin word, *sacramentum*: two words of quite different meaning in ordinary conversation, but sealed with the stamp of a common origin. These two terms make clear to us the use of the word in Latin signifying a holy thing, and in a very special way a holy form of words by which man appealed to the divinity. The *sacramentum militare*, the military oath, by which the Roman soldier pledged himself to service under the leadership of a military chief, was the solemn rite among all in ancient Rome who wished to consecrate the course of life they were entering upon. Trans-

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lated into Christian terminology, the word signified the irrevocable undertaking on the part of the Christian to serve under the standard of Christ. From the close of the second century we came across this signification fully established in the works of Tertullian; and quite naturally it is at first Baptism which is referred to by this term. In the eyes of a society penetrated with military ideas Baptism was the sign of enlistment among the followers of Christ. But on the other hand—and the language of Tertullian equally bears evidence of this—it had not yet succeeded in conveying an idea which was quite primitive in Christianity, namely that of a mystery or a sacred and hidden thing. In Greek it was called *mysterion*. The word belongs to St. Paul and signifies sometimes the depths of God Himself, and sometimes the invisible operations of His grace. The translators hesitated when they had to turn the text of St. Paul into Latin. Sometimes they hit upon no better method than to simply transcribe the Greek word into Latin: *mysterium*. At other times they searched in the Latin vocabulary for a suitable equivalent, and they discovered none better than the old word *sacramentum* taken in its widest significance. Thus two currents of meaning mingled their waters: the idea of *sacramentum* as an oath, and the idea of *sacramentum* as a mystery, and they met in the one interpretation of *sacramentum* as a sacrament, that is a formula or a rite with a mysterious significance. This term was pre-eminently suitable to describe the rites used at the initiation of a Christian. As a matter of fact, we find it from this time, and during the third century regularly used to signify Baptism, Confirma-

tion and the Eucharist. Nay, more, it already is found suitable to include in the scope of its meaning other rites as well, and especially the rite of Christian marriage. Did not St. Paul say: "This sacrament —this mystery—is great: I speak in Christ and the Church," His spouse.

In the impetuous pages of a Tertullian, in the flowing periods of a St. Cyprian, Christian theology still stammers. In the works of St. Augustine it attains full development, and is replete with the promise of maturity. In making his own the linguistic inheritance of the generations gone before, the Doctor of Hippo comes across the word *sacramentum*. He is not satisfied with applying it, as consecrated usage had already done, but he goes on to enlarge its meaning, and leaves as a legacy to the ages to come an exposition of the term sacrament which will serve as a weapon to forge vast conquests. Seen from without, the Christian use of the word sacrament appears as an expressive term employed to set forth religious thought; seen from within, it manifests itself as something fruitful in divine agency. The idea of an efficacious sign, thought out to the depths by St. Augustine, forms the framework of the sacramental system which the scholastic thinkers brought to perfection, and which the Council of Trent will, as it were, canonize. "Whence," says St. Augustine, "comes this wonderful power to the water which brings it about that, when it touches the body, it washes the heart? Is it not the form of words which operates, not by the sound which is passing, but by the faith which remains?" [1] St. Augustine marks the division into

[1] In Joan., Tr. LXXX, 3.

three parts, a process which the subsequent centuries will perfect: he knows that all the Christian sacraments come from the institution of Christ: he knows that they differ from the sacraments of the Old Law. These announce the grace of Christ Who is to come, but cannot be as yet the vehicle of that grace: whilst the sacraments of the New Law signify the grace, and give it to souls that are well disposed.

Medieval thought, which is the child of St. Augustine, works on this data. The two ideas of an efficacious sign and of a mystery constantly recur in their speculations, which, truth to tell, give at first the impression of ceaseless repetition. In the twelfth century Peter Lombard with a methodical mind brings out clearly, and better than anyone before him, the idea of a cause as well as that of a sign. Furnished then with a precise definition, he singles out the seven sacraments of the New Law, which are distinguished by their special characteristics from all the rites which lack this great efficacy conferred on them by Christ. The sevenfold sacramental system now enters definitely into the teaching of the Schools; and, with Innocent III, finds its place in the official documents of the supreme teaching authority.

In the thirteenth century, St. Thomas gives a perfect and complete form to the metaphysics of the sacraments, which had been outlined by St. Augustine. He sees in the present state of fallen man the urgent call for the institution of the sacraments. He sees in the sacraments of the New Law active courses of grace which serve as channels to bring to our needy generations that grace which flows from the Passion of Christ. In the peripatetic

theory of the constitution of natural compounds he finds a framework at hand into which to fit the mechanism of these supernatural agencies which are made active by the Power from on High. He is thus enabled, by this suitable analogy, to introduce a good deal of order and unity into the analysis of these sacramental operations.

The seal of the supreme authority was fixed on this work of the centuries by the Council of Trent. The attacks of the heretics will thus have this happy repercussion of calling forth from the Church a restatement of her acquired positions. To the doctrine of justification by faith alone without works she will set in opposition first of all the Christian tradition of justification by the rite of Baptism, and then the necessity of Baptism as the source of Christian works. Since that memorable date the sacramental theology of the Church has made little progress; but the efforts of destructive criticism gave Pius X the opportunity to set forth with fresh precision the faith of the Church in the divine institution of Baptism and the other sacraments.

II. *The Institution of Baptism*

In Baptism, which is a creation special to the Law of the Gospel, is realized in a special way the type of the sacrament. We have to study it in its origin, then dealing with its rite and its salutary operation.

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, says the Gospel of St. Luke,[1] the word of God was made to John, the son of Zachary, in the

[1] Luke iii.

desert. And he came into all the country about the Jordan, preaching the baptism of penance for the remission of sins. John did not spare the crowds that came to him to receive baptism. He treated them as a race of vipers, saying to them: "Who hath showed you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of penance . . ." When they asked him: "Art thou Christ?" he replied: "I indeed baptize you with water; but there shall come one mightier than I, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to loose. He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire . . ."

The Baptism of the Holy Ghost and of fire, the special gift of Christ, differs, then, according to the very testimony of the precursor, from the Baptism of water and of penance which was preached by John. It differs from this, if not in its rite, at any rate in its spiritual significance. The four evangelists are in agreement in predicting it; all four agree also in pointing out the Baptism which our Lord voluntarily willed to receive from the hands of John as the principle of this Baptism.[1] The narrative of St. Matthew is as complete as any of the others in the fulness of its detail.

"Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to the Jordan, unto John, to be baptized by him. But John stayed him, saying: I ought to be baptized by thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering, said to him: Suffer it to be so now. For so it becometh as to fulfil all justice. Then he suffered him. And Jesus being baptized, forthwith came out of the water: and lo, the heavens were opened

[1] Matt. iii. 13-17; Mark i. 9-11; Luke iii. 21-22; John i. 32-34.

to him: and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming upon him. And behold a voice from heaven saying: This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. iii. 13-17).

Here we have both the consecration of the initiative taken by the Baptist, and the inauguration of a new order of things. Our Lord had nothing personally to get from this baptism of penance, which the Jews came to ask of John; and John behaved in the only way proper under the circumstances. But, by humiliating Himself at the feet of the Baptist, our Lord wished to give an example to His followers which they should never forget. And, by receiving on His members the ablution of the water, He wished to consecrate for ever this element as the source of spiritual regeneration for all sinners who would come to receive the Gospel. Whilst He put the seal of His divine approval on the mission of the Baptist, He at the same time unsealed for humanity the living fountain destined to spring up to the end of time.

At the scene by the Jordan the Three Divine Persons appeared, each in a distinct rôle. The Father appeared in order to give testimony to His only Son; the Son, as accredited by the Father to the human race; the Holy Spirit, resting on the Son, as the source of all grace to men. The Divine Trinity thus personally sealed the institution of Christian Baptism; the seal is repeated for each one of us in the official formula of Baptism, which the Risen Jesus is to prescribe to His disciples.

The whole of tradition as voiced by the Fathers points to this scene by the Jordan as the origin, properly so called, of Christian Baptism. But a new ordinance of such importance ought to be

guaranteed and fully unfolded. God has seen to this. After the initial fact seen by all the people whom the thought of salvation had drawn to the banks of the Jordan, witness the authentic commentary and, as it were, the charter of Christian Baptism placed in safe keeping by the Master.[1]

Nicodemus, a doctor in Israel, impressed by Jesus' miracles, came by night for instruction, and declares his purpose simply: "Rabbi, we know that thou art come a teacher from God: for no man can do these signs which thou dost, unless God be with him." Jesus answered and said to him: "Amen, amen I say to thee, unless a man be born again he cannot enter the kingdom of God." Nicodemus showed his ingenuousness by asking: "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb, and be born again?" Jesus confirms what He has said by pointing out the double source of this new birth: the Holy Ghost, the source of divine operations, and water, the visible instrument of this mysterious change. "Amen, amen I say to thee, unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh, is flesh: and that which is born of the Spirit, is spirit. Wonder not that I said to you, you must be born again. The Spirit breatheth where he will: and thou hearest his voice, but thou knowest not whence he cometh and whither he goeth: so is everyone that is born of the Spirit." Jesus has recourse to the material analogy of the wind, which comes whence we do not know and passes mysteriously, to teach in rough outline this guileless soul. The preaching

[1] John iii. 1-21.

of the Kingdom of God will take up this analogy again without going beyond it; it will be but a faithful echo of Him who taught Nicodemus thus: "Amen, amen, I say to thee, that we speak what we know, and we testify what we have seen, and you receive not our testimony. If I have spoken to you earthly things and you believe not: how will you believe if I shall speak to you heavenly things? And no man hath ascended into heaven but the son of man who is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him, may not perish, but may have life everlasting. For God so loved the world, as to give his only begotten Son; that whosoever believeth in him, may not perish, but may have life everlasting."

After the practical lesson given in public on the banks of the Jordan, after the theoretical instruction given individually to Nicodemus, we see it put into action by a repetition of the institution of Baptism. Jesus sends the twelve Apostles,[1] and at another time the seventy-two disciples[2] to preach and to heal the sick. The Synoptics mention the preaching and the cures; St. John speaks only of Baptism being given, and tells us of a conflict that broke out thereupon between the disciples of our Lord and those of the Baptist. These latter denounce to their master the disciples of Jesus for usurping their functions. They said: "Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond the Jordan, to whom thou gavest testimony, behold he baptizeth and all men come to him." John replied: "A man cannot receive any-

[1] Matt. x. 5-42; Mark vi. 7-13; Luke ix. 1-6.
[2] Luke x. 1-16; cf. John iii. 22-26; iv. 1-2.

thing, unless it be given him from heaven. You yourselves do bear me witness that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him. He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, who standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth with joy because of the bridegroom's voice. This my joy therefore is fulfilled. He must increase but I must decrease. He that cometh from above, is above all. He that is of the earth, of the earth he is, and of the earth he speaketh. He that cometh from heaven is above all. And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth; and no man receiveth his testimony."

After these many acts of preparation, we see in the Gospel of St. Matthew the Risen Lord officially investing with the power of making men the children of God those who carry the message of salvation:[1] "All power is given to me in heaven and in earth. Going therefore teach ye all nations: baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." Mark repeats with conciseness this peremptory command:[2] "Go ye into the whole world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved: but he that believeth not shall be condemned."

The connection which exists between these events is clear. The preparation for Baptism is made by him who is the forerunner of the Lord; it is instituted in principle and manifested in act; then it is the subject of an authoritative commentary; and

[1] Matt. xxviii. 18-19.
[2] Mark xvi. 15-16.

after a temporary test, it becomes the normal practice laid down by the preaching of the gospel.

What fresh element does it contain? This question ought not to be left unsettled; because on the reply depends the judgment we pass on the relations of the two Testaments. The Higher Criticism of our day has solved it in its own characteristic fashion. It starts with the indisputable fact that Baptism in the case of the first Christians served as the sign of enrolment in the Christian community. Then it lays down that the gospel accounts were meant to give an explanation of Baptism, and confer on it any claims that it lacked. There is a theory bold enough when you consider the early date of our gospels—a fact more and more widely admitted, and when you consider also how deeply the institution of Baptism is embedded in the Epistles of St. Paul,[1] the earlier ones going back to a time previous to our gospels. In those epistles it is the necessary presupposition of all Christian development, and the basis of the whole Pauline chain of reasoning; Christ redeemed all by dying for them; but, to partake of the fruit of the Redemption, each man ought to die and be buried with Christ, and this mystic burial is the work of Baptism.[2] In preaching Baptism, Paul did not administer it, and besides he did not put it forward as his own invention.[3] We must then take as a fact that in which St. Paul bases all his preaching and speculation. It is too full of risks to try to rebuild this fact by conjectures. Is it not better to go back to the gospel?

[1] Titus iii. 5; Eph. v. 26, etc.
[2] Rom. vi. 3-5; Col. ii. 12.
[3] 1 Cor. i. 13-17.

However, this general reply does not dispense us from going into detail, and examining again whether, as is said nowadays, Christian Baptism does not represent the term of a liturgical development outlined in the Old Testament, hastened by the preaching of John the son of Zachary, sealed by the invocation of the Three Divine Persons, and then ante-dated in our gospels by a clever piece of fiction.

In order to account for this liturgical development it would be necessary at first to fix a starting point. This we don't find.

It is true that we find in the Old Testament different figures which the New Testament links up with baptism. For instance St. Peter refers to the universal deluge[1] in this way. St. Paul does the same in regard to circumcision,[2] as well as to the Red Sea, and to the spring which was unsealed in the desert,[3] to quench the thirst of the children of Israel. We could add other references, as for instance the passage through the Jordan,[4] the burial of our Lord.[5] But who does not see that these figures, which, with the exception of circumcision, have not the nature of permanent institutions, and scarce set Israel on the way to Christian Baptism? In regard to circumcision the difference in the two rites alone makes sufficiently clear the distance there is to overcome. Nothing short of a positive institution was necessary.

Amongst the Jews there were indeed ablutions in

[1] 1 Peter iii. 21.
[2] Romans ii. 25-29; iii. 1-2; 1 Cor. vii. 18-19, etc.
[3] 1 Cor. x. 1-2.
[4] Acts vii. 45.
[5] Rom. vii. 4.

use; some of which were prescribed by the Law of Moses[1] for the priests, others multiplied in a strange manner by the whim of the Scribes and Pharisees in the centuries immediately preceding our era, and laying claim more or less to ancient tradition.[2] But we know that Christ in the gospel did not spare these so-called traditions. And besides, the people who recommended these frequent ablutions never claimed to obtain from them that newness of heart which is the special effect of Christian Baptism. They only claimed a legal purity immediately suggested by the Mosaic ordinances.

Sometimes it is said that the baptism of the proselytes was the prototype of Christian Baptism. But what do we know of the baptism of the proselytes? We gather nothing from the Bible, or from ancient Jewish tradition, or from Philo or Josephus. We must go down to the second century of our era before we meet with two or three allusions, more or less distant to this baptism of the proselytes in the Sibylline Oracles,[3] in Arrien,[4] and in the Mishna.[5] It is possible and even probable that bathing was an integral part of the initiation of the proselytes from a more remote period; it is suggested by later testimonies. But frankly we know nothing for certain about it, and if we try to add to the gospel literature in regard to baptism by firmer and more abundant sources we utterly fail.

There remains the Baptism of John. It is not

[1] Lev. xiv; Num. xvii.
[2] Matt. xv. 1-20 and parable.
[3] *Or. Sib.*, IV, 164.
[4] *Diss., Epict.* ii. 9.
[5] *Talmud Babyl.* (ves?), Berachoth 47b; Jebamoth 46b.

denied that there is a connection between this and the Baptism of Christ. But the Gospel is silent about the exact nature of this. The former of these baptisms prepared the way to the latter, and ought not to be confounded with it, because, according to the explicit statement of John who had inaugurated this baptism, the Baptism of Christ was to be different in its nature and efficacy. We shall have to return to this distinction. For the present we note that John distinguished them.

There exists, then, no ground to call into doubt the transcendent origin of Christian Baptism, and the claims of this great new rite to signify the special inheritance received by those whom the grace of Christ has regenerated in the Holy Spirit.

As such the Apostles conferred it, and as such the peoples, whom they evangelized, had recourse to it. This is the procedure which every page of the Acts of the Apostles bears witness to.

On the day of Pentecost three thousand are converted by the words of St. Peter. They ask of him: "What shall we do?", and the Apostle replies: "Do penance, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." [1]

The Samaritans, converted by the preaching of the Deacon Philip, receive Baptism from his hands.[2]

The eunuch of the Queen of Ethiopia, converted by the same Deacon, is also baptized.[3]

Saul, struck to the ground on the road to

[1] Acts ii. 37-41.
[2] Acts viii. 12-16.
[3] Acts viii. 32-38.

Damascus, receives a visit of Ananias, who baptizes him.[1]

Cornelius the Centurion, already filled with the Holy Ghost, is baptized with all his house at the command of St. Peter.[2]

Lydia, the seller of purple, is baptized with all her household, after having heard at Phillipi the preaching of Paul.[3]

At Ephesus the disciples of John, after having heard the teaching of Christ, received His Baptism.[4]

Paul at Jerusalem tells of his conversion, and does not omit to mention Baptism.[5]

We shall have occasion to continue the account of this testimony as found in the Epistles of St. Paul and of St. Peter.

In addition, according to the mind of the early Church, Baptism was the distinctive mark of the Christian. Unless we admit an effect without a cause, we must conclude that this distinctive mark was the express wish of our Lord.

The only doubt we can have is in regard to the exact manner of the institution. Some of the Fathers lay down several stages, according to the relative importance they attach to either the Baptism of our Lord, or the interview with Nicodemus, or the command of the Risen Lord. But the common tradition places the institution properly so called on the occasion of the scene depicted on the banks of the Jordan. For the institution dates from the time when grace from on high was linked to the

[1] Acts ix. 10-18.
[2] Acts x. 44-48; Coll. xi. 16.
[3] Acts xvi. 12-15.
[4] Acts xviii. 24; xix. 5.
[5] Acts xxii. 11-16.

rite which confers it by the express will of Christ.[1] And it is generally agreed that that took place on the day that our Lord, submitting in His own person to the rite of Baptism, sanctioned this ordinance and consecrated the water by contact with His sacred Humanity. Then the interview with Nicodemus explained the whole meaning of the institution already made, and the command of our Lord after His resurrection regulated the carrying out of the sacrament.

[1] St. Thomas, *Summa Theol.*, IIIa, qu. 66, a. 2.

CHAPTER II

THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF BAPTISM

To God alone—and to Christ—belongs the power to raise to the dignity of a sacrament a sensible rite by endowing it permanently with spiritual power. We have already seen how Christ exercised this power reserved to Him when He instituted Baptism. We have now to go on to specify the object of His institution by describing its essential elements.

This is a question as old as theology itself. The Fathers saw the necessity of analysing the sanctifying rite. They did so in their catechisms and homilies, taking care to adapt their language to the capacity of the faithful. When, in the Middle Ages, the Schools created a technical language to scientifically expound dogma, we see in the theology of the sacraments, like in many other disciplines, the results of this development: and we already know that the peripatetic theory of the constitution of natural compounds supplied the framework of this theology.

What were the considerations that led to this choice? These are not difficult to indicate. According to the peripatetic theory two elements are discovered in bodies: one element lacking completion

and recurring with different disguises under the various changes of the material being, and the other element which completes the former and imposes on it certain characteristics. The first element, lacking completion or determinable, is called *matter*; the element completing or determining is called *form*.[1]

Experiences of everyday occurrence had opened the way to this theory. When, for instance, a living being assimilates a strange substance by means of nutrition, it robs the matter of its present form in order to submit it to, and incorporate it into, its own being, subjecting it to the conditions of its own life: the active principle of this assimilation is the substantial form of the living being. When the colours of the solar spectrum are thrown on a white sheet, the dead matter of the white sheet undergoes various surface changes from the accidental forms of the colours. Something analogous in the constitution of the sacrament will be seen by anyone who is quick enough to detect similarities in things. This bodily ablution involved in Christian Baptism could serve various purposes, such as propriety, hygiene or some other end. The words chosen by Christ do away with this ambiguity, they raise the ablution to the dignity of a sacramental rite performed in the name of the Three Divine Persons: they complete the Christian sacrament, composed of the external act, which is the matter, and the words, which are the form: the form being significant of the spiritual effect desired by God.

The man who is deemed to have first made use of this terminology is William of Auvergne, not long

[1] Aristotle, *Physics*, VII, p. 190 B, 20; *Metaphysics*, II, 7, p. 1032 A, 17.

after the year 1200. Before the end of the thirteenth century, it was used universally in the Schools. Applicable as it is to the essential rites of the Christian life, it is specially suited to explain the essence of the sacrament as entrusted by Christ to the Church.

The Church possesses indeed a power of supervision in regard to the sacrament instituted by Christ. Set up by Christ as it is, the sacrament is also the possession of the Church. It was the intention of Christ, as shown in His acts, to organize the Christian life, not on the lines of an individualism excluding all intermediaries between God and the faithful, but on the plan of a social life common to the Head and its members. It is the task of the Church to regulate, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the functions of this vast body. And thus the administration of the sacraments as the permanent sources of supernatural life is in the hands of ecclesiastical authority, and to this authority is entrusted the charge of the details. It is then the intention of Christ that those who participate in the grace of Baptism and the other sacraments should submit to the authority of the Church as the divinely accredited dispenser of the social treasures given into her keeping.

The Church is then well aware that in her supervision of the sacraments she must adhere to certain conditions, namely those laid down in the concrete by Christ in instituting them. This realization on the part of the Church has found definite expression in a decree of the Council of Trent, which lays down that the Church can regulate all the details of the administration of the sacraments in regard to the circumstances of time, and place, and such-like,

provided the substance of the sacrament is left intact: *Salva illorum substantia.* It is the office of the Church to interpret in an authentic manner the intention of Christ in this matter, and in the carrying out of this mandate the gift of infallibility is brought into play. We are anxious to lay down this principle from the beginning, and in the course of the history of the sacraments the many results will gradually be realized.

Let us apply the general doctrine to Baptism. That will entail laying down clearly the conditions necessary first for the ablution, which is the matter of the sacrament; then for the words or the form; and finally for the intention of the minister, which also pertains to the sacrament itself.

I. *The Matter of Baptism*

The essential matter of Baptism is water, natural water, proper for an ablution. From the very earliest times the tradition of the Fathers made itself clear on the universal aptness of this element for the baptismal ablution. The *Didache* of the Apostles, probably before the end of the first century, thus reads:[1]

" In order to administer Baptism, perform it with the following matter: after having taught all that precedes, baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost in living (flowing) water. If that is not available then in other water, and in default of cold water, in warm water. If you have not sufficient of either, then pour some

[1] *Didache*, VII, 1-3.

water on the head, in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

We see from this that the manner of ablution (whether it be immersion or aspersion) does not matter much, so long as real water is used. Tertullian in his turn a hundred years later lays down:[1] "It matters little whether baptism is given in the sea or in a pond, in a river or in a fountain, in a lake or in a basin: there is no difference between these and those baptized by John in the Jordan or Peter in the Tibur."

The same writer opens his treatise *De Baptismo* with a hymn to the sacrament of salvation;[2] he sings the praises of the bliss of the Christians, who, after the manner of Christ, the divine *Ichthus*, are born in water.

Although the Church in her liturgical rite orders us to use water that has been blessed for this purpose when we administer Baptism, yet such an injunction does not mean that Baptism is invalid when it is given with other water in case of urgency.

Nevertheless the urgent insistence of the Fathers on the virtue of the form used in the administration of Baptism might suggest the idea of some kind of physical change brought about in the baptismal water; or at least that a power is added to it; and on that account an accusation has sometimes been brought of magical influence. In order to strengthen this plea, and give it some semblance of truth, they have thought it enough to compare the rite of Baptism with that of the Eucharist. In the case of this sacrament the Catholic Church teaches that by

[1] *De Baptismo*, 4.
[2] *Ibid.*, 1.

the words of Consecration there takes place in the eucharistic species a marvellous change, by which is brought about the conversion of one substance into another; and to signalize this change theologians have coined the word *transubstantiation*. The parallel that exists between the two rites could easily suggest the idea of some kind of change, at least of an accidental nature, brought about permanently in the water by the form of Baptism.

But this is only a superficial idea. The impression we have spoken of can be explained by the language the Fathers use in their effort to get the idea of baptismal sanctification into the minds of those who were, as a rule, very simple. They had to stress emphatically in their catechisms the idea of the sacramental operation. Consequently their figurative language easily gave the impression of some physical change. But for all that, neither from the words of St. Augustine:[1] *Accedit verbum ad elementum et fit sacramentum*, nor from similar phrases which could be quoted from many passages in the works of the Fathers, can we deduce anything save this principle: it is necessary to join the form to the matter to make a sacrament.

We shall have to come back to the question of analysing the way the sacrament operates.

The Baptismal water cannot be supplied by any other element. Towards the end of the sixth century John Moschus narrates the incident of the Jews baptized in the desert with sand in the case of urgency.[2] The intention may have been excellent, but such an ablution did not succeed in bringing about the Sacrament of Baptism.

[1] *In Joann.*, Tr. LXXX, 3.
[2] *Pré spirituel*, n. 176.

From the regulations laid down in the *Didache* we note that a triple immersion or aspersion is spoken of. And this custom, along with the mention of the Three Divine Persons, is maintained by the continuous tradition of the Church even to to-day when the same injunctions are laid down in the Roman Ritual. Nevertheless it is not of such importance as to endanger the validity of Baptism if only one aspersion is performed. In this matter it is instructive to note the account of two controversies which arose in the sixth century when two Sovereign Pontiffs gave two opposite solutions without contradicting each other. About the year 560 A.D. Pope Pelagius was questioned by Gaudentius, the Bishop of Voluterra in Etruria, in regard to the rite of Baptism, and the answer was that there should be a threefold immersion in the name of the Trinity. At the same time, on the other hand, the Spanish Church followed a different custom of baptizing in the name of the Trinity of course, but only with one immersion. The Spanish Church was by that custom distinguished from the Arian Visigoths, who, living in the same country, baptized by a threefold immersion, and decried the Catholic custom, maintaining that they alone had kept the lawful rite of Baptism. Pope St. Gregory the Great, when asked about the matter in 591 by Leander the Bishop of Seville, replied: "Be very careful not to give the heretics an advantage over you by changing your custom for them: your custom is lawful, and you can retain it."

Besides, to justify the custom of the triple immersion or aspersion we can appeal to other symbolism than that of the Trinity. It is true that several Fathers, and notably Tertullian, do appeal

to it; but, on the other hand, a greater number of the Fathers appeal to the symbolism of the three days of Christ in the tomb, and among those Fathers are St. Basil, St. Cyril of Jerusalem, St. Gregory of Nyssa, as well as St. Leo the Great, St. Peter Chrysologus, St. Maximus of Turin, the Pseudo-Dionysius and St. John Damascene. Others appeal to both symbolisms, and this twofold explanation tends to prevail after the sixth century. We find it in the writings of Gregory the Great, Alcuin, Peter Lombard, and St. Thomas Aquinas.

An objection arises from the words spoken by St. John the Baptist when he compares his baptism to that of Christ. He said that his baptism was of water, whilst that of Christ was not a Baptism of water, but a Baptism of the Holy Ghost and of fire. What can this mean but that fire, and not water, is the proper matter of the Baptism of Christ to distinguish it from every other Baptism? And, in addition, this Baptism was given by the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost appearing under the appearance of tongues of fire.

The objection has not escaped the attention of the Fathers, who interpret in quite different ways the "Baptism of fire." Some have recalled the words of the prophets in which they speak of the Lord as a devouring fire, bringing about an entire purifying in His followers. Others see here a reference to the torments of purgatory completing the purification of the elect; whilst others, again, see an allusion to the fire of hell which tortures the damned without making them pure. This last interpretation seems to be quite foreign to the natural meaning. Before anything else, it is necessary to take note that the Baptist has excluded

nothing by thus figuratively pointing out the work of Christ to come. He has not excluded this rôle of Purifier, which the Lord claims from His prophets, a rôle typified in a very suitable manner by the ardour of fire. His language, too, is well calculated to describe the complete work of Christian Baptism. Moreover it includes the work of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost when He was to perfect the work of Christ by burning away the last dross in souls already touched by Baptism, and filling them with the fire of their apostolate. Thus we see that, by giving this metaphorical expression a meaning so inclusive, it is very suitable to describe the work of Christ.

And in addition John the Baptist was a prophet; he made use of figures of speech, and had not to point out the matter of Christian Baptism with the same accuracy of language which he would have to do were it a question of the institution of the Sacrament. This use of language was reserved for Christ, both in the act of His own Baptism on the banks of the Jordan, and in His interview with Nicodemus.

In both these memorable episodes the water of Christian Baptism is clearly evident, and this fact is enough to make clear what Christ laid down in the institution of this sacrament.

Why was this matter chosen for the Sacrament? The choice was made by God with a purpose which we can safely give a definite explanation of, because it is clearly set out in the Scriptures. The symbolism of the Baptismal ablution suggests a work of moral purification; and it is a work of this kind that the Holy Ghost had always set forth by the prophets; it is a work of this kind that the

Baptist had clearly spoken of at a later time when he called men to penance; it is therefore a work that ought to be fulfilled in Christian Baptism. Examining the sacramental symbolism St. Augustine observes that the signs chosen by God to signify the work of grace ought to show forth some natural analogy with this work which they signify: this analogy justifies the divine choice, and the institution is founded on it. This requirement is completely met by the Baptismal ablution.

In addition to this symbolism, perfectly clear and intelligible to all, St. Paul sets forth another when speaking of the burial of Jesus Christ:[1] the waters which close over the sinner when immersed are a figure of the grave into which Christ descended for us; the emerging of the sinner after Baptism is a figure of the Resurrection of Christ.

And finally the Fathers have seen in the choice of an element so easily obtained an evidence of special mercy on the part of God, who wished to put within reach of all the sacrament necessary for the salvation of all men.

II. *The Form of Baptism*

The form of Baptism raises more numerous and more difficult questions than the matter of this Sacrament.

The necessity of certain words, to perfect the Sacrament as such, has scarcely been questioned by Christians, for the perfectly simple reason that the ablution, without any accompanying words, would remain completely indetermined, and without the

[1] Rom. vi. 3-5; Col. ii. 12.

significance and power necessary to make it an efficacious sign of grace. But sometimes the question has been raised as to whether the form would be valid if it merely invoked the Trinity without mentioning the sacramental act. In this matter the liturgical tradition of the Church has the force of law. Pope Alexander III (1159-1181) interpreted it as follows: "If the child is plunged into the water three times whilst saying: 'In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen': without saying: 'I baptize you in the name of the Father . . .' the child is not baptized." In the seventeenth century some theologians raised doubts on the historical truth of this decision. However, a decree of the Holy Office, approved by Alexander VIII (7th December, 1690), condemned this proposition: "Baptism has been sometimes conferred validly with this form: 'In the name of the Father . . .' and omitting: 'I baptize thee.'" Therefore it is not sufficient to merely invoke the Trinity. But now the question arises: to what extent is it necessary?

The invocation of the Trinity is necessary on account of the command of our Lord (Matt. xxviii. 19). But there is at least an apparent conflict to be noticed between this injunction and the constant practice of the Apostles. We find that, whilst the command of our Lord in regard to Baptism in the name of the Trinity is found just once at the end of the Gospel of St. Matthew, the other apostolic writings make frequent allusion to Baptism administered "in the name of Jesus Christ" (Acts ii. 38; viii. 12; x. 48); or "in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts viii. 16; xix. 5); or again "in Christ" (Rom. vi. 3; Gal. iii. 27).

In all these cases the trinitarian formula is not found.

There are two possible solutions to the problem. According to one solution, which has often been brought forward from the early days of Christianity, the fact of the clash is admitted. It is explained by claiming a special dispensation of Divine Providence, setting aside, for the time being, the injunction imposed in the Gospel in view of the peculiar needs of the first generations of Christians. The other solution, the one more prevalent in our time, is to deny, in the name of primitive tradition itself, any such conflict by maintaining that the Apostles actually baptized in the name of the Trinity.

In support of the first solution appeal is made to St. Basil, who sets down in his treatise on the Holy Ghost:[1]

"There is no reason for anyone to take umbrage at the language of the Apostle who often omits the words 'In the name of the Father and of the Holy Ghost' in speaking of Baptism; nor ought he to rush to the conclusion that he has neglected the invocation of these names. He writes: 'For as many of you as have been baptized in Christ have put on Christ' (Gal. iii. 27); and in another place: 'All we, who are baptized in Christ Jesus, are baptized in his death' (Rom. vi. 3). The reason is that the invocation of Christ is the confession of the all Three Persons; it involves God who gives the unction, and the Son who receives it, and the Spirit who is anointing, as taught by Peter in the Acts: 'Jesus of Nazareth: how God anointed Him with the Holy Ghost' (Acts x. 38). And in the same way we read in Isaias:

[1] *De Spiritu Sancto*, XII, 28.

'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me' (Isaias lxi. 1). The Psalmist also writes: 'Therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows' (Psalms xliv. 8). On the other hand, the Apostle in speaking of Baptism refers only to the Spirit: 'For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body' (1 Cor. xii. 13). And similarly we read in the Acts: 'You shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost' (Acts i. 3); and again in St. Luke: 'He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost' (Luke iii. 16). We must not therefore conclude that Baptism is perfect if it is conferred by the invocation of the Holy Ghost alone. For it is necessary to guard the tradition of life-giving grace. He who has purchased us from perdition has given us a gift of new life, the origin of which is ineffable and mysterious, but eminently salutary for our souls: we can't add anything to it, or take away anything, without forfeiting eternal life. . . ."

St. Basil, therefore, does not admit that we can change in an arbitrary fashion the trinitarian formula given by our Lord, but he nevertheless sees in the invocation of Christ the implicit invocation of the whole of the Trinity. St. Ambrose echoes his opinion;[1] and the authority of these two illustrious Fathers has created a stream of opinion that has found its way into a certain document from the Holy See, and also into the works of St. Thomas Aquinas.

Pope Nicholas I was asked by the Bulgarians concerning the validity of Baptism as given by a minister who was suspect. In his reply he appears to consider that Baptism given in the name of the

[1] *De Spiritu Sancto*, I, iii., 42.

Trinity and Baptism given in the name of Christ were of equal validity. He relies for this opinion on the authority of St. Ambrose.[1]

St. Thomas Aquinas clearly taught that, since Christ instituted Baptism with the invocation of the Trinity, the omission of this invocation would nullify Baptism. But, confronted with the texts in the Acts of the Apostles, he concludes that, in the primitive Church, by virtue of a special revelation, the Apostles baptized in the name of Christ only, and that this was a special act of Providence to glorify the name of Christ before Jews and Gentiles. He relies for this opinion on the authority of St. Ambrose and that of Pope St. Nicholas.[2]

That is the first solution of the problem.

The second solution takes into account the usages of Christian phraseology. It is quite true that many of the early Fathers, in spite of the fact of their

[1] Nicholas I: *Reply to the Bulgarians* 104, Nov. 866; You ask about the baptisms conferred in your country by a certain Jew—you don't know whether he is a pagan or has become a Christian. Those who have been baptized in the name of the Holy Trinity, or even in the name of Christ, as we read in the Acts of the Apostles (they are one and the same, as Ambrose says) have certainly not to be baptized again.

[2] St. Thomas, III[a], q. 66, a. 6: Christ instituted the Sacrament of Baptism to be conferred with the invocation of the Trinity. Therefore anything wanting to the full invocation of the Trinity, takes away the integrity of Baptism. . . . He adds, Ad. 1[m]: by the special revelation of Christ, the Apostles baptized in the name of Christ in the early Church, in order that the name of Christ, which was hated by the Jews and Gentiles, should be honoured by the fact that at the invocation of that name the Holy Ghost should be given in baptism. Ad. 2[m] and 3[m], he rests this solution on the authority of St. Ambrose and Pope Nicholas.

deep attachment to the Trinitarian Formula for Baptism, speak constantly of Baptism in the name of Jesus Christ, and Baptism in the name of the Lord Jesus . . . not implying thereby anything against the Trinitarian Formula. Side by side with this formula in the same context we sometimes find, for the sake of brevity, the other formula used. We will find this procedure if we consult the *Didache*, or the works of St. Justin, St. Ireneus, Origen, St. Cyprian, Firmilian of Cesarea, the anonymous author of *De Rebaptismate*, Pope St. Innocent I, and many others. Judging by this how can we deny on *a priori* grounds that the author of the Acts of the Apostles was using terminology that was so widely used? It would be against the dictates of prudence to make such a denial. There is therefore real ground for probability that the phrase: "Baptism in the name of the Lord Jesus" as used in the Acts is a convenient way to express the one and only Christian Baptism without any special reference to the form of this Baptism.

A number of modern scholars, both Catholic and non-Catholic, prefer this second theory. It does save us from having recourse to a doubtful conjecture.

Whichever solution we adopt in dealing with this problem of history, confined as it is to the times of the Apostles, the theology of the Sacrament is not affected, nor are the practical conclusions in regard to present-day usage of the Sacrament. To-day there is no valid Sacrament without the invocation of each of the Three Divine Persons as laid down by our Lord: that is the rule laid down with the authority of the Church.

But it may be that one may be minded to object

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to the above line of argument on these lines: if we come across repeatedly in the Acts of the Apostles the phrase "Baptism in the name of the Lord Jesus" and yet they have not a strictly liturgical meaning, then what stronger reason can we adduce for taking the mention of the three Divine Persons in the Gospel of St. Matthew as having a strictly liturgical significance? There is no reason to interpret literally one expression rather than the other; it seems groundless to treat one case differently from the other. This line of argument is more specious than well-founded; and we reply that the two cases are quite different. There is no parallel between an official formula expressly commanded by our Lord in a matter of such importance, and an expression used in an historical narrative where the writer can exercise his choice of words. And in addition the Church does not depend merely on *a priori* grounds in recognizing the precept of the Lord as the necessary formula for the validity of Baptism; no, it is based on the unchanging tradition which interprets with authority this command of the Lord and bears witness to its dogmatic meaning. There is no similar tradition in regard to the historical statements in the Acts. And so it is lawful for anyone to take them as abbreviated statements. The Catechism of the Council of Trent mentions both solutions, and leaves us free to choose either.[1]

The Trinitarian formula is then clearly of obligation. We must now bring forward a justification for it.

Why is *name* put in the singular when distinct mention is made of the three Divine Persons? It

[1] II, ii., 15-16.

is because the Baptismal faith is an act of homage to the unique majesty of God, One in Three Persons. And again the grace of Baptism is the common gift of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, associated in the selfsame operation with different titles; for every work of God *ad extra* is common to the whole Trinity. On the other hand the formula of Baptism echoes the terminology of the Bible where the name of God stands for God Himself. Christ has made use of this biblical expression, and, placing on it the seal of His own revelation, has manifested His wish to adapt it to the special profession of the Christian Faith.

Such a clear profession of the Trinity has led to suspicions in regard to the text, and the charge of anachronism has been levelled against it. We must rebut this charge and clear away these suspicions.

It is quite true that this is the first occasion in the Canonical Scripture that the statement of the Three Divine Persons in God is found so accurately and perfectly expressed. But apart from perfection of statement, the statement itself is not new.

At the very time that we find the belief in the Trinity expressed in the gospel, we find that belief firmly established and witnessed on a wide scale.

Scarcely anyone to-day denies that the Trinitarian form was used from the end of the first century: so much so that some have thought that they could explain by this fact the introduction of such a formula in St. Matthew's Gospel. This is an entirely gratuitous explanation. But the fact remains all the same; and the discovery of the

Didache of the Apostles in last century has given us the first link in the chain of tradition by which we reach the origin of Baptism in the name of the Trinity found in the New Testament. And besides there is no difficulty in recognizing the statement of the Trinity in the Gospel of St. John.

In the middle of the first century we find the doctrine of the Trinity set forth at the beginning of nearly all the Epistles of St. Paul; often we find it in the final salutations; and frequently in the course of the Epistles. Read Titus iii. 4-6 on account of its direct connection with Baptism: "But when the goodness and kindness of God our Saviour appeared, not by the works of justice, which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the laver of regeneration, and renovation of the Holy Ghost, whom he hath poured forth upon us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour . . ." And again in Rom. viii. 9-11 we read: "But you are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his . . . And if the Spirit of him, that raised up Jesus from the dead, dwell in you: he that raised up Jesus Christ from the dead shall quicken also your mortal bodies, because of his Spirit that dwelleth in you." Also 2 Cor. xiii. 13: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the charity of God, and the communication of the Holy Ghost be with you all. Amen." To these you can add Rom. viii. 15-17; 1 Cor. xii. 4-6; Gal. iv. 4-6; Eph. ii. 18; iii. 14-17; iv. 3-6; 1 Thess. i. 3-5; v. 18-19; 2 Thess. ii. 13 *sqq.*, etc. We need not repeat that the doctrine of the Trinity is found in the four Evangelists in recounting the scene of the Baptism

of the Lord. And for a literal statement we can refer to the text of St. Matthew xi. 27, which anticipates the mind of St. John: "All things are delivered to me by my Father. And no one knoweth the Son, but the Father: neither doth anyone know the Father, but the Son, and he to whom it shall please the Son to reveal him." See finally Luke x. 22; Matthew xii. 32; Mark iii. 10; Luke xii. 10; i. 35; xxiv. 49, along with Acts i. 4-8, and 1 Peter i. 2, etc.

We need not further insist on a thesis set forth in a masterly fashion by M. Lebretin, in his volume on *Les Origines du Dogma de la Trinité*.

In the East and in the West for many hundreds of years we find the statement of the Trinity in the formulary of Baptism. It is true to say that we cannot assign an equal antiquity to the formula used to-day by the minister of the Sacrament. The final determination of this form is shrouded in doubt; and all the ancient liturgies contain a statement of the Trinity differing slightly in the way it is expressed. Standing by the side of the baptismal piscina, the catechumen was asked three times: "Do you believe in the Father?—I do believe." Then the holy water was poured on his forehead. "Do you believe in the Son?—I do believe." Again the water was poured. "Do you believe in the Holy Ghost?—I do believe." A third time the operation was repeated. But we do not hear the names of the Divine Persons pronounced at the time he finished pouring the water, and there is nothing to prove that they were said. Our present formula is first found, the date is perhaps the end of the fourth century, in a text attributed to Timothy, Patriarch of Alexandria and mentioned by

Cardinal Petra.[1] But for a long time after this date we find the formulary of the Trinity said immediately after the questions and answers, not at the time of the pouring of the water.

Long ago the fact was noted by outstanding liturgists of the Benedictine Order: for instance Dom J. B. du Frische (+1693) and Dom N. Le Nourry (+1724). In our own time Dom P. de Puniet[2] has borne like testimony with an increased wealth of detail. There is no reason to express surprise, since the significance of the ancient rite is one with that of to-day. The difference in the liturgical setting is only a detail; and besides, the connection of the statement of belief in the Trinity and the act of aspersion is clear from the whole context. There is nothing which does not easily fit in with the decrees of Alexander III and of Alexander VIII as quoted above.

The validity of the sacrament is no more brought into question by the difference of grammatical setting given to the form of Baptism in East and West. The priest in the East says: "N. is baptized in the name of the Father . . ." In the West he says: "N., I baptize thee in the name of the Father . . ." Both formulæ say precisely the same thing, only it is said impersonally in the East and personally in the West.

[1] *Juris ecclesiastici Groecorum Historia et Monumenta*, t. I, p. 631.

[2] *Dictionnaire d'Archéologie chrétienne et de Liturgie*, t. II, pp. 339, 343.

III. *The Intention of The Minister*

A third factor is necessary to complete the essence of the Sacrament: the intention of the minister.

Just as the Baptismal ablution ought to be determined by the words of the minister conferring the Sacrament in order that it should be part of a sacrament, so in like manner the complete rite of matter and form should be in turn directed by the will of the minister, who raises it to the dignity of a sacrament. An automaton, which poured the water and said the words correctly, would not confer any Baptism.

The Council of Florence stated in general terms this law which regulates the constitution of the Sacraments of the New Law. *All these Sacraments are made up of three elements, namely, the things forming the matter, the words the form, and the person of the minister conferring the Sacrament with the intention of doing what the Church does: if any of which are wanting, there is no Sacrament.*[1]

We see from this that the person of the minister enters into the Sacrament in its own special way, namely, by his intention which lays at the base of the reality of the Sacrament. This third element is different in its nature from the other two. It is a moral factor, which gives a direction to the material rite.

Such is the economy of salvation as set up by Christ. He has redeemed us as Man; He dispenses by men the means of our redemption; the sacraments, which bring grace to our souls, ought to be human acts. To the Corinthians St. Paul recalls

[1] *The Decree to the Armenians.*

this divine economy, when he says:[1] "Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ, and the dispensers of the mysteries of God."

The *Intention* signifies the direction of the will. This direction can be more or less strong in proportion to the advertence and the energy with which it is applied.[2]

We mean by *actual* intention that which implies a present advertence and an effective pursuit of the end. By *virtual* intention we mean a directing act which precedes and orientates the will, the orientation persevering even if the mind is distracted. An *habitual* intention is one which requires a directing act and an orientation of the will, both of which are performed in the beginning; and so long as there is no retraction this fact, though past, remains in possession. In the case of an intention that is called purely interpretative there is no intention manifested, but we are justified in presuming it on account of certain indications which point to such an hypothesis.

Let us take an example taken from the reception of the Sacrament. A catechumen presents himself to the priest at the end of his probation to be baptized; such a one has the actual intention of receiving Baptism. Another catechumen testifies his willingness to prepare for Baptism, and begins the study of Christian doctrine. During this period he attends to the cultivation of his lands, to the

[1] 1 Cor. iv. 1; cf. i. 11-15; iii. 4-5; 2 Cor. v. 18-20; Titus, i. 7.

[2] See St. Thomas, III[a], q. 64, a. 8. But the terminology of the Angelic Doctor includes only three degrees. He calls habitual intention what we call virtual. Scotus distinguishes more precisely, in IV d., 6 q., 6 a. 2.

care of his family and a thousand other occupations which prevent his attention being constantly fixed on the preparation he has embarked on: his life is none the less penetrated by the virtual intention of Baptism. A third catechumen evinces the same wish; but before the end of the period of preparation he has an apoplectic stroke and loses all consciousness: he is not capable of an actual or even a virtual intention; all the same it is admitted that he can benefit from an habitual intention which has not been withdrawn. And lastly, take the case of an infidel who has shown some desire to become a Christian without actually beginning the work of a catechumen. If he also is stricken unconscious without having done anything as a catechumen, the missionary can sometimes conclude that, if he were aware of his condition, he would ask for Baptism, and therefore can benefit from an interpretative intention.

To posit a human act, such as the administration of the Sacrament requires, neither a purely interpretative intention nor even an habitual intention is sufficient; for no one has ever baptized without wishing to do so. A virtual intention, however, is sufficient for a human act, and that consideration ought to be a consolation to such as are distracted in prayer or in the acts of the sacred ministry. Such an intention is enough for valid baptism; and with much more reason an actual intention suffices.

These conclusions are important to anyone who realizes the purport of what the Apostle has to say concerning the dignity of the Christian minister. Obviously they have no meaning for those Protestants who look upon the sacramental rite as only a specially eloquent preaching of doctrine, and not

as the act of priestly mediation. For this reason the necessity of intention was a dead-letter for the Fathers of the Reformation.

After having stated what kind of intention is necessary, it remains to examine the object of the intention. Doubtless the intention ought to concern the Sacrament, since the intention raises the rite to the dignity of a sacrament. And further: under what precise aspect ought the intention to be concerned? Ought the intention to be to administer a sacrament as such, or merely to perform the external action?

The distinction may seem subtle. All the same it was raised, after the seventh session of the Council of Trent, by a theologian who had taken part in the discussions on the sacraments, by name Ambrose Catharin, O.P.; it was the sequel of controversies that had gone on for a fairly considerable time.

In his book *De Intentione Ministri* (Rome, 1552), Catharin, echoing the opinion of Robert Pulleyn in the twelfth century and Peter Auriol in the fourteenth century, considered he was justified in laying down that an exterior intention, or the intention to perform the rite, was sufficient for the validity of the sacrament. The most specious argument in favour of this opinion is taken from the teaching of the Church on the value of the sacraments, namely that they have an efficacy independent of the faith and sanctity of the minister. We shall have to set forth this doctrine in our next chapter; in the meantime we will provisionally take it as proved. Neither the faith nor sanctity of the minister is necessary for the validity of the sacrament, and the reason is that Jesus Christ, the

High Priest of the New Law, guaranteed its institution and can confer the grace, even if the instrument is unworthy. This we admit. But here, there is no question of the faith or sanctity of the minister: the only point at issue is whether the intention is made in regard to a certain definite point. The argument therefore, which is brought forward, does not really touch the point which Catharin wishes to make.

The common opinion of theologians, both before and after the Council of Trent, has always required for the validity of the sacrament not only the intention to perform the rite, but what is known as the *interior* intention, that is, either the intention to administer the sacrament realized as such, or at least the more vague intention of giving the sacrament recognized as a sacred rite in the Church. The reason for this opinion is as clear as it is convincing: it is drawn from the texts of St. Paul we have already quoted, and from the whole of the ecclesiastical teaching drawn from those texts in regard to the ministerial rôle of the one who confers the sacrament. He can confer it only in so far as he is constituted the instrument of Christ for the dispensation of grace. But he can be constituted an instrument of Christ for such a dispensation only by conforming his will to the will of Christ on this particular point. Such a conformity requires something more than the intention to perform the external rite in a correct manner; it requires the intention to administer the sacred rite according to the will of Christ or His Church, namely as a rite able to confer grace; or, in other words, the intention to administer a sacrament. This requirement is in agreement with the law common to

human acts. The ignorance of the minister can be great, and even his wickedness, without the validity of the sacrament being, for all that, affected. Still his intention must include the enacting of a rite held as sacred in the Church; otherwise, the action would be lacking in the adaption requisite to constitute it the rite of the Christian minister.

It may seem superfluous to refute the arguments from history brought at times in favour of a purely exterior intention; they are arguments which lack solid foundation. Amongst the best known we can instance the case of St. Athanasius as a child baptizing other children at play; or that of the comedian Genès who takes the part of a catechumen, receives baptism in jest, and then, touched by grace, dies a Christian. The historical truth of these incidents is very doubtful indeed. The only witness for the story narrated of St. Athanasius is Rufinus, an historian well intentioned enough but of very doubtful authority; and from a chronological point of view it is difficult to reconcile with the best attested facts of the history of Athanasuis. The incident narrated of St. Genès seems to be much more doubtful. We do not find any trace of it before the martyrology of Adon in the second half of the ninth century, and we cannot draw any conclusion from the uncertain and discordant data. Is the person in question Genès, the Roman comedian? He received Baptism perfectly in earnest before being led to martyrdom. Or is it a question of Genès, the comedian of Arles? He died a martyr, and was therefore baptized in his own blood. It might be that the origin of these legends in hagiography was the case of a certain Gelasinus, a comedian and martyr at Heliopolis in Phœnicia,

mentioned by John Malalas in his Chronology about the year 600. We can then draw no certain conclusion from all that. St. Augustine gives the instance of a baptism given by a comedian, but will not venture to say that it is valid. Luther definitely declared that an absolution given in jest is as valid as any other. Leo X condemned this as blasphemous in his Bull *Exurge Domine*, given on the 15th of June 1520, in the twelfth proposition.

The opinion supporting the sufficiency of an external intention for the validity of a sacrament has never had wide vogue. The probability in theory, which it may once have had, is practically nullified by a decision of Innocent XI, condemning, on the 2nd of March 1679, the following proposition: "It is not forbidden to follow in the administration of the sacraments a probable opinion on the validity of the sacrament instead of a safer opinion, so long as we are not prevented doing so by law, custom, or a grave risk. In this case we ought not to use a purely probable opinion in the administration of Baptism, or the conferring of Orders, priestly or episcopal." In spite of the final restriction, which is meant to guarantee the validity of Baptism against any interpretation which would lead to abuse, the general proposition is condemned. That means to say that we cannot follow the thesis defended by Catharin in the case of Baptism or any other sacrament.

CHAPTER III

THE MINISTER OF BAPTISM

We find the same merciful dispensation in the choice of either the ordinary or extraordinary minister of Baptism as we found in the choice of an element so easily obtained to be the matter of this sacrament which is the most necessary for salvation.

We shall have to examine two cases: first of all, that of solemn Baptism, given with all the formalities consecrated by the liturgical use of the Church; and that of Baptism which is not solemn, but given with the bare essential rite, which is used in case of necessity. The first must be given by the ordinary minister of Baptism; the second can be given by an extraordinary minister.

I. *The Ordinary Minister*

In the primitive Church, the administration of Baptism was at first the special work of the Apostles, and the disciples specially chosen by our Lord. To these was given the command to teach and to baptize (Matt. xxviii. 19). The association of these two powers, from that time frequent, is met even outside the apostolic college. We find Philip, a

simple deacon, preaching to and baptizing the Samaritans (Acts viii). We find Ananius, apparently not one of the clergy, baptizing Saul (Acts ix. 18). And, moreover, the Apostles made wide use of their power of delegation. Take for instance Peter. He sees the centurion Cornelius and his household, who were already filled with the Holy Ghost and waiting only to be baptized. He takes steps that they should be baptized by others (Acts x.). Paul baptizes by way of exception, for his mission is in another direction. He tells us that the Lord has sent him not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel (1 Cor. i. 17).

The Apostolic Churches, which were gathered round the bishop so compactly, looked to him for the whole administration of the sacraments. Specially eloquent in this matter is the testimony of Ignatius, the Martyr Bishop of Antioch, at the beginning of the second century:[1]

"Where the bishop is, there ought to be assembled the multitude, just as where Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic Church. It is not allowed to baptize or celebrate the agape apart from the bishop."

The monarchical episcopate, established throughout the Church, retained for a century the ordinary administration of Baptism. Gradually, as the dioceses extended, it was necessary to devolve part of this work on the priests and deacons. St. Thomas gives us the reason for this prerogative of the priests.[2] The Christian priesthood has been set up specially to administer the Eucharist, the Sacrament of ecclesiastical unity. But Baptism

[1] *Ad Smyn.*, VIII, 2.
[2] III[a], q. 67, a. 2.

opens the way to ecclesiastical unity. Therefore it will equally belong to the priest to confer Baptism.

Side by side with the priest, the deacon has also a rôle to fill: he assists the priest, and in case of necessity takes his place. We can trace this point of discipline from the second century in the whole of ecclesiastical tradition. The *Ordines Romani* of the Carolingian epoch tell of the Roman deacons in the Lateran baptistery baptizing with the Pope. In view of these functions that eventually devolved on him the deacon received at his ordination this investiture: *Diaconum oportet baptizare.*

II. *The Extraordinary Minister*

But, in case of necessity, anyone can be called on to baptize. We are justified in recognizing this mission implied in the command of our Lord: "Baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." This precept gives us sufficient indication that the person of the minister is of small account, as the efficacy of Baptism is distinctly attributed to the divine name. But centuries of debate were to elapse, continuing long into the Christian era, before the essential teaching emerged explicit. Before the end of the second century, Pope Victor (189-199) had clearly laid down the principle that all were capable of baptizing. Some years later in Africa, Tertullian tells us that such was admitted, but that people hesitated about certain special cases. For instance the Council of Elvira in Spain, at the beginning of the fourth century, excluded bigamists—that is those men who had been twice married successively.

For a long time women were excluded. We find Tertullian mentioning with indignation the scandal of certain heretical sects, in which women baptize: an unheard of proceeding in the Catholic Church. The fourth Council of Carthage (398) specially prohibits it. We have to go down to the time of Urban II (1088-1099) to find a case of a woman baptizing openly and with the cognizance of the Church. In the twelfth century the permission was extended; and in the thirteenth century it causes no surprise. St. Thomas states the right as in possession, and he gives the reason, on the one hand the fact that Christ is the chief minister (John i. 33), and on the other hand in the equality of the sexes before Christ (Gal. iii. 28).

What is possibly a greater reason for surprise is that for the validity of the sacrament neither the faith nor moral virtue of the minister is an indispensable condition. This conclusion was not arrived at without debate. We have now to recall briefly the struggles that centred round the "Baptism of heretics."

III. *The Baptism of Heretics*

Very lively controversies were waged on the question of the validity of Baptism given by an unworthy minister; at first within the confines of the Catholic Church; later between Catholics and those outside.

The custom had prevailed in Asia and Africa of denying any validity to Baptism administered by heretics. We notice this tendency not long after the year 200 in the writings of Tertullian and also

in those of Clement of Alexandria. It is acknowledged in the first half of the third century, and becomes universal in Latin Africa during the episcopate of St. Cyprian.

Those who would repeat Baptism which had been received outside the Church contended that they were strictly following out a dogmatic principle. The grace of the Holy Spirit, they considered, has been confided to the Church, and cannot be found outside it. Therefore those who do not belong to the Church cannot confer on others this grace which they are deprived of. They quote Scripture to prove this. Thus according to St. Paul, Eph. iv. 4, 5, there is one Body of the Church and one Spirit; one Lord, one faith, one Baptism. A little later, in the middle of the third century, agreement is reached on these matters amongst the bishops of Proconsular Africa under the leadership of St. Cyprian, and amongst the bishops of Numidia. They are aware that a different custom prevails in Rome and elsewhere; but without setting out to reform others, they hold on with certainty in Latin Africa to their African custom as of obligation and do not wish for any change. They send word to Pope Stephen of this resolve after a Council of seventy-one Bishops of Africa and Numidia; and in the autumn of 256 another Council of eighty-seven Bishops acquaints him again of their unanimous decision. In the meantime a rescript comes from the Pope, brief and authoritative: "In regard to those who come to you from any sect whatsoever, let no innovation be made, but stand by tradition: let hands be imposed on them for penance; in so much as the heretics themselves do not confer a special Baptism on those who pass from one sect

to another, but are satisfied to admit them to Communion." Cyprian is astonished and indignant. In a letter to Bishop Pompeius he passes a severe judgment on this alleged appeal to tradition, and opposes to it the theological reason for his position, a reason he deems to be final. At the same time he enters into negotiations to find supporters, and in reply to a summons from Rome he takes the line of passive resistance. He sends one of his deacons, Rogation by name, to Asia Minor, who visits Firmilian, Metropolitan of Cesarea in Cappadocia, and brings word of a letter written to Pope Stephen by Firmilian which is more violent and outrageous than all that Cyprian had written. The death of the Pope relieves a situation which had become strained in the extreme. Sixtus II, who succeeded, seems to have relaxed somewhat the rigour of his predecessor; soon Sixtus himself ends his life by a glorious martyrdom, the news of which Cyprian communicates to the Church at Carthage. Some months later Cyprian himself is beheaded publicly before his own people. The baptismal controversy remains in suspense. From Alexandria, the great Bishop Denys intervened, begging Rome not to do anything precipitate.

Half a century passes in an attempt to find a way out. The threat of schism was averted, but each party clung to its own custom. Unity was only to be achieved again after a more serious breach.

Towards the end of the year 311, a conflict broke out in the Church of Carthage. The occasion was the ordination of the Bishop Cecilian, the successor of Mensurius. Those who took umbrage at the election of Cecilian, brought forward the plea that he had received consecration at the hands of Felix

of Aptunga. They said that Felix had faltered during the great persecution by delivering the sacred books belonging to his Church to the imperial officials: he was therefore a *traditor*, and was, according to his accusers, virtually an apostate and incapable of performing any ecclesiastical power. And thus the Anabaptist thesis of Cyprian was revived and applied to the Sacrament of Orders. The objectors brought forward in place of Cecilian their own elected bishop, Donatus by name. This was the origin of the Donatist schism.

We do not propose to follow all the ramifications of the schism, but only to note its reaction on the settlement of the baptismal question. The dispute, taken by the schismatics to the Emperor Constantine to settle, was submitted to the Council of Arles (314), which, in its eighth canon, confirmed the decision of Pope Stephen in the year 253. The canon runs thus:

"In regard to the people of Africa, who follow their own special law by repeating Baptism, it was decided that, if anyone comes to the Church from a sect, he should be asked what form was used [in his Baptism]; and if he answers that he has been baptized in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, then we must confine ourselves to laying hands on him, in order that he should receive the Holy Ghost. But if, on being asked, he does not reply correctly in regard to this formula of the Trinity, then he should be baptized."

The General Council of Nicea (325) gave a decision on the same lines. It distinguished the case of the Cathari as representing the tradition of Novatian from that of the Paulianists who stand for the tradition of Paul of Samosata.

Thus Canon 8 reads: "In regard to those known as Cathari (the pure), if they come into the Catholic and Apostolic Church, the Holy Ecumenical Synod has decreed that, after receiving the imposition of hands, they will remain in the ranks of the clergy. But, before anything else, they ought to declare in writing that they will recognize and obey all the decisions of the Catholic and Apostolic Church."

Canon 19 runs: "In regard to the Paulianists, who come into the Catholic Church, a decision has been taken: their baptism ought to be repeated. In regard to those who belonged to the body of the clergy, they are to be ordained by the Bishop of the Catholic Church after having been rebaptized so long as they are without stain or reproach."

A Council of Carthage, in 348, forbade the repetition of Baptism.

But it was left to St. Augustine to demolish the case of the Donatists by an unanswerable line of argument, as well as by his pastoral solicitude. He made the distinction in all the sacraments between the principal author Christ, and the minister who is a man in each case. Here was a principle of universal application which secured the validity of the sacrament, no matter what were the faults of the man.[1] He refuted besides the arbitrary claim of the schismatics that they alone represented the whole Church, and in answer to that assumption on the part of certain sectaries he appealed to the unanswerable conviction of the Christian world:[2] *The judgment of the whole world is final that those are to be condemned who separate themselves from the world-wide body found everywhere.* And

[1] *Contra Epistolam Parmeniani*, II, xi, 23; xiii, 30.
[2] *Ibid.*, III, iv, 24.

in addition he confounded them by pointing out their own inconsistencies as evidenced by facts under their very eyes: namely, that whilst they repudiated Catholic ministers of the sacraments, they themselves accepted ministers notoriously of ill-repute so long as they were Donatists.[1]

In reply to their constant appeal to the authority of Cyprian, he replied that Cyprian could have been mistaken on a particular question, but that he blotted out his personal error by his heroic death; and that in any case Cyprian did not sin against charity, but gave an example of unflinching loyalty to the unity of the Church whatever might have been his own particular opinions.[2] And finally, he appealed many times to a "general council" as having pronounced against the thesis of the Donatists. There has been a good deal of discussion as to which is this plenary council to which Augustine appeals but does not specifically name. Everything points to the conclusion that it was the Council of Nicea, which alone could claim such a designation, and which as a matter of fact did pronounce against the Donatist theory when it condemned the Novatians. If this has not always been recognized, it is because the eighth Canon of Nicea has been interpreted in various ways. These divergencies ought to be discounted in face of the authoritative interpretation of Pope Innocent I given in the lifetime of St. Augustine. This matter calls for some explanation.

It cannot be denied that neither the ruling of Arles (314), nor that of Nicea (325) and Carthage (348) succeeded in putting an end to the controversy on the

[1] *Contra Cresconium*, IV, xvi, 19.
[2] *De Baptismo contra Donatistas*, II, ix, 14.

repetition of Baptism. In the fourth century St. Optatus of Milevis, in his struggle with the Donatists, made a distinction between Baptism given by schismatics and that conferred by heretics, holding the first as valid, but not the second. Illustrious Fathers, such as St. Athanasius, St. Basil, St. Gregory of Nyssa, and St. Cyril of Jerusalem, continued to frown upon Baptism given by heretics, an attitude which is little in line with the regulation laid down by Pope Stephen. We find the same hesitancy in the seventh Canon (suspect besides) of the second General Council (Constantinople, 381). And how can we explain how St. Athanasius, who played such a notable part as we know at the Council of Nicea, and how St. Basil, the greatest Canonist of the Eastern Church, were both to misunderstand the mind of the Catholic Church on this point? Rather than believe in such ignorance on the part of these great Fathers, sometimes doubt has been cast on the meaning of the eighth Canon of Nicea, although the meaning seems very clear; it has been held that the Council of Nicea did not recognize the ordination of the Novatian clergy, and even their Baptism; and that in admitting the principle of the admission of the best amongst them to the ranks of the Catholic clergy, it was only done on condition of re-Baptism and re-Ordination.

But this interpretation does violence to the text of the eighth Canon of Nicea, which does not mention re-Baptism. And it also is in conflict with the nineteenth Canon of the same Council, which provides a definitive counter-proof. We have seen that this nineteenth Canon distinguishes very clearly between the case of Paulianist clergy and that of the Novatian, referred to in the eighth Canon.

The latter professed the orthodox faith in the Trinity: and so there was no question of their re-Baptism. The former did not hold a correct belief in this dogma; and so they were to be re-baptized, and, if there was occasion for it, they were to be re-ordained. This reading is not a modern invention: it is in accordance with the authoritative reply of Pope Innocent I, writing on the 15th of February 404, to Victricius the Bishop of Rouen, and also to Rufinus the Primate of Macedonia on the 13th of December 414. We could not ask for anything clearer.[1]

In regard to St. Athanasius, we do not doubt the great part he took in the discussion at Nicea in the capacity of Deacon to his Bishop Alexander; but his attention was necessarily concentrated primarily on the Arian question, which was uppermost in their minds, especially in the case of the Alexandrines. He could not go deeply into the other questions discussed by the Fathers of the Council and laid down in the Canons. As for St. Basil, he was not born at the time the Council of Nicea was held, and so we can understand more easily still his inability to get clear by his own efforts of the confusion reigning in the East during the fifty years which followed the Council of Nicea. Even the question of the term *consubstantial* was so confused that people did not dare to mention the word; we can therefore understand how this generation could not have very clear ideas on the subsidiary decrees of Nicea. Take St. Cyril of Jerusalem, he is a wonderful doctor and champion of the faith; and

[1] See these texts in Denzenger-Bannwart, *Enchiridim Symbolorum et Declarationum de rebus fidei et morun*, n. 94 and 97.

yet he carefully avoids mentioning the term *consubstantial*. This fact alone is eloquent enough in regard to the difficulties of spreading the sound teaching, defined at Nicea, either in regard to the Arian question, or any other matter.

The principal factor, however, in the debate on the validity of Baptism, was the question of orthodoxy in regard to the Trinity. Those who sincerely professed belief in the Trinity were deemed the rightful ministers of Baptism. Whilst those who with their lips professed their belief without having a correct faith were by this very fact suspected of vitiating, by an heretical intention, the Christian meaning of the sacramental rite: and so Baptism conferred by them was often considered invalid. Such, it seems, happens in the case of the Arians. The question of the necessary intention was interwoven with the question of the minister of the sacrament: they cannot be entirely separated.

Before leaving this discussion we will revert to a document we have already referred to, bearing on the form of Baptism, the complete explanation of which it was necessary to leave to be settled. It is the well-known reply given by Pope Nicholas to the Bulgarians (November 866) in regard to Baptism given by a doubtful person, namely a Jew, about whose conversion to Christianity there was question. The reply of the Pope on this most difficult question of the character of the minister was that such did not invalidate the rite. There remained the question whether he used the proper rite, namely Baptism in the name of the Trinity, or at least in the name of Christ, which according to St. Ambrose, said the Pope, amounted to the same thing. Now we have already pointed

out that the solemn definitions of the Church demand the explicit mention of the Three Divine Persons to make the Baptism valid, and yet Nicholas I says the contrary. But this is only a parenthesis, not the main purpose of the reply; it is an *obiter dictum*, which is not put forward with the guarantee of infallible authority, even supposing—which is not the case—that the reply of Nicholas I to the Bulgarians is an *ex cathedra* document. It was possible for Nicholas I to make, in passing, an incorrect remark, and to rely on a doubtful interpretation of St. Ambrose.

The main decision is untouched: this Jew, whether converted or not, could give Baptism.

CHAPTER IV

THE SUBJECT OF BAPTISM

I. *The Baptism of Adults*

THE Christian religion, concerned with all men without distinction of race, offered to everyone the sacrament of initiation. Therefore every man was potentially a candidate for Baptism. Had not Christ said:[1] "Teach ye all nations"? Did he not emphasize the law for each individual when He said:[2] "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved: but he that believeth not shall be condemned"? The Apostle refers to His intention when he says:[3] "I desire therefore, first of all that . . . prayers . . . be made for all men . . . For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth."

This universal law only admits of such exception as is required by the fact that the sacrament can be received once only:[4] "One Lord, one faith, one

[1] Matt. xxviii. 19.
[2] Mark xvi. 16.
[3] 1 Tim. ii. 1-4.
[4] Eph. iv. 5.

Baptism." A man who has once received the character of Baptism cannot receive it a second time. St. Paul reminded the Hebrews of this impossibility when he wished to stop their hankerings to return to the Jewish observances:[1] "For it is impossible for those, who were once illuminated, have tasted also the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, have moreover tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, and are fallen away: to be renewed again to penance . . ." The Fathers have never wavered on this point. The controversy which arose in the third century in the Catholic Church itself, and was renewed in the fourth century between Catholics and Donatists, gives evidence of a complete unanimity on this fundamental issue. Men may discuss the validity of Baptism given under these or those circumstances; but it is taken for granted, on both sides, that Christian Baptism, once given, cannot be repeated.

The meaning of Baptism, as the rite of initiation, requires this. Baptism is a spiritual birth, according to the words of the Lord. It is also a burial of the old man, according to the teaching of St. Paul. Now birth takes place once only, and burial also. We shall have to return to this point in explaining the sacramental character, both in its origin and in its requirements.

The repetition of Baptism as such was the work of certain heterodox bodies, namely, the Valentinians, Marcionites and Elkesaites, all condemned by the Fathers. The Church's tradition on Baptism being conferred once only was unwavering. A sect known as Anabaptists grew up in the Reform party

[1] Heb. vi. 4-6.

in the sixteenth century. They denied the validity of Infant Baptism, and rebaptized adults. These fanatics made themselves conspicuous by terrible debauchery and by a crusade of anarchy; their revolt, having become a social scourge, was drowned in blood.

Baptism ought besides to be considered as an undertaking assumed in the Christian life; and from that fact there follow certain conditions necessary for its validity.

A man in possession of his reason and freedom does not undertake to follow Christ without knowing and willing what he is doing; that means to say that, in the case of an adult, the intention to receive the sacrament is an indispensable condition of its validity. Innocent III examines the case of violence being used in order to administer Baptism to an infidel or catechumen. His solution is that if the resistance offered is relaxed and the violence is, in the main, accepted, then the sacrament is valid. On the other hand, if the will remains firm, and continues to oppose the external violence which is brought to bear on it, then the sacrament is invalid.

We are led back to the doctrine of intention, outlined above, with the distinctions involved: namely, actual, virtual, habitual, and interpretative intentions. We have made the distinctions in the case of a catechumen. The adult catechumen, who presents himself for Baptism with the actual intention to receive it, fully satisfies the condition required. The catechumen who, during his period of preparation, whilst engaging in other interests, still keeps a virtual intention to receive Baptism, even whilst his mind and body are bent on material

pursuits, he also has a sufficiently efficacious intention for Baptism. In the case of a catechumen, who is laid low with a fit of apoplexy before the end of his term of preparation, and is no longer capable of an actual or virtual intention, he can still receive the sacrament by virtue of an habitual intention. And finally, in the case of an infidel, who has not become a catechumen, and yet has known the Gospel and seemed disposed to accept it, he can in certain cases benefit by virtue of an interpretative intention.

Here we ought to notice that a less degree of intention is needed for the valid reception of Baptism than is required for its administration. The reason of this is that the minister of the sacrament ought, according to Christ's institution, to posit a human act, and for that there is required an actual intention, or at the very least a virtual intention. But the recipient of Baptism is not always to be required to exercise a human act; in case of incapacity he will be able to benefit by an habitual intention, or even by a purely interpretative intention, the Church giving credit to his goodwill. The reason for this difference is to be sought in the merciful Providence of God, who wishes to make easy for all the way of salvation, and can require only a passive attitude on the part of a will in which there is no obstacle to grace. To do its divine work grace needs only the action of the minister of the sacrament, and, so long as it does not find the entrance to soul closed by the refusal to receive the sacrament, it can find its way in.

It need not be said that the subject of Baptism must be living. The fantastic question of " Baptism

of the dead," raised by a text of St. Paul,[1] does not provide an exception to this law.

The Apostle is unfolding the doctrine of the bodily resurrection to the Corinthians, and thus expresses himself: " (Supposing you do away with the corporal resurrection); what are you to say of those who are baptized for the dead? If the dead do not rise, what good is it to be baptized on their behalf? " The Fathers, who comment on this text, have held that there were probably at Corinth certain of the faithful who were so foolish as to substitute themselves for a deceased catechumen or infidel who had died without Baptism, and who have received the sacramental rite according to the intention of the deceased person. The Apostle mentions this superstitious practice without approving or condemning it, he only uses it to supply an argument *ad hominem*. Those who indulged in such practices, he would imply, showed by that very fact that they believed in the resurrection of the body. That is all that St. Paul implies. He takes this practice in order that he may strengthen the faith of those to whom he writes. We do not propose to go into the false interpretations given to the words of the Apostle by some of the heterodox.

The idea of a Baptism in the world beyond, given in Limbo to the just of the Old Law, or even to certain select souls of the New Law, will be dealt with when we treat of the necessity of Baptism. Suffice to hold that Christian Baptism ought to be given in this life.

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 23.

II. *The Baptism of Infants*

How then can we harmonize what has been said about the necessity of consent for the validity of the sacrament with the received practice of the Church of baptizing infants who are incapable of an act of the will? Is there not here an apparent contradiction? And more than once in the history of the Church we meet with sectaries who revolt against the practice of Infant Baptism. For instance in the twelfth century we have the Cathari and the Vaudois with Peter de Bruis and Arnold of Brescia; and in the sixteenth century we have the Anabaptists. Luther began by quite logically, according to his principles, rejecting this Christian custom; later on, afraid of the consequences of the practice, he set it up again and based it on the score of the special efficacy of their preaching. Calvin retained the practice without holding it to be necessary. Erasmus did not deny its validity, but challenged its opportuneness: he thought that the baptized person, on attaining the use of reason, ought to be asked to make his choice: if he ratifies the undertakings made on his behalf at his baptism, then they are to be held as binding; otherwise they do not bind in conscience.

The question ought to be considered from the point of view of history and that of dogma too. From the historical point of view we must admit that the practice of Infant Baptism is not positively proved by the documents of the Apostolic Age, but is only supported by probable arguments. For instance we read in the Acts of the Apostles[1] and

[1] Acts xvi. 15, 33.

in the first Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians[1] of whole families baptized by the Apostles, and no exception is mentioned. It is quite probable that there were infants in these families, and that Baptism was administered to them. Such a line of action is not unlikely on the part of the Apostles who were aware that it was a universal condition of salvation, as laid down by our Lord in speaking to Nicodemus. Since no one can enter the Kingdom of Heaven except by the gate of Baptism, it was quite natural to open it to infants. And the Gospel again shows us the special love of our Lord for the little ones, where angels see the face of the Father. We can take it that St. Paul was in accord with this attitude in so much as he contrasts the universality of the fall with that of the redemption,[2] as well as stating the will of God to save all men, and setting forth Baptism as a new circumcision in contrast to the old.

A text of St. Paul, however, seems to weaken the force of this conclusion. He is expounding to the faithful of Corinth the effects of Baptism for a husband, and he writes thus:[3] "For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the believing wife; and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the believing husband: otherwise your children should be unclean; but now they are holy." What does this mean if not that the children of a father or a mother who is baptized are themselves holy, and therefore exempt from original sin, and hence free from the necessity of Baptism? This would be a contradiction of the doctrine of original sin, so clearly taught

[1] 1 Cor. i. 16.
[2] Rom. v.
[3] 1 Cor. vii. 14.

elsewhere by St. Paul. There is here a difficulty to solve. From the beginning of the third century Christian exegesis set itself to explain it. Tertullian saw in the children of the faithful the new born candidates for the faith, privileged by the very fact of their birth, but not exempt from stain; he does not consider them as exceptions to the universal law. This explanation was repeated by St. Jerome, by St. Augustine, in his controversy with the Pelagian heretics, and by the whole of Catholic tradition. The text of St. Paul was taken to signify nothing more than that.

When we consider the question from an historical point of view we find the Baptism of infants mentioned in the writings of St. Ireneus[1] as an occasional and local practice, not as yet as a universal procedure, for the usage for several centuries remains undetermined. Tertullian says that he considers such Baptism not opportune;[2] he thinks it is premature, and even dangerous, and considers it better to wait till one has attained an age when the passions are under control, and when there is less risk of its being soon profaned. This very protest of Tertullian against what he thinks is undue haste is a proof that other people were of a different mind, and baptized children in the earliest infancy. Fifty years later, St. Cyprian was asked by a bishop as to whether he was under an obligation, as some held, to wait until a child was eight days old in order to be in line with the analogy of the circumcision of the Jews. His reply was,[3] in accordance with a Council held at Carthage,

[1] *Adv. Haereses*, II, xxii, 4.
[2] *De Baptismo*, 18.
[3] *Ep.* LXIV.

that there was no obligation to delay. About the same time, Origen[1] declared clearly for Infant Baptism, and expressly appealed to an apostolic tradition. The inscriptions on the Roman catacombs[2] often bear witness to cases of children baptized from the tenderest age; and the liturgies, which link us up with the Roman tradition of St. Hippolytus, bear equal testimony. At the same time we cannot say that there was a universal and constant tradition in the time of the Fathers. St. Gregory of Nazianzen[3] counsels a deferring to the dawn of reason, say the third year, so that the child would retain some recollection of its Baptism; he says that others put it off longer, and the homilies of the Fathers, protesting against the delay in receiving Baptism, show that the custom of Infant Baptism had some difficulty in getting firmly established. Even St. Augustine, unwavering as he was on the doctrine of original sin, hesitated for some time. Gradually he came to affirm it, in face of the Pelagian error, from the consideration that the divine bounty ought not to be deferred; and he also makes appeal to an apostolic tradition. In reply to the objection that there is no consent, he says that these little ones, incapable as they are of making a personal act of faith, are baptized into the faith of the Church which speaks on their behalf. This reply embodies the faith of the Catholic Church. Read the letter of Augustine to Boniface, the Bishop of Cataqua, who wrote to consult him on the

[1] *In Lev., Hom.*, viii, 3; *In Rom.*, L. v, 9.
[2] See, in the *Dict. Apol. de la Foi Catholique, l'article Epigraphie*, 1444.
[3] *Or.*, xxxix, 14.

Baptism of infants.[1] He sets out to destroy the Pelagian objection, and denounces the criminal procedure of the heretics, who wish to put off Infant Baptism.

The documents of the Apostolic See, from the fourth century onwards, counsel and lay down Infant Baptism. In returning to this question the Council of Trent was endorsing a practice of more than a thousand years; it condemned the inconsistent attitude advocated by Erasmus.

To anyone who would take scandal at what they consider an unwise laying-on of hands by the Christian priesthood on those who have not come to years of responsibility, and thus, they say, imposing a burden on their defenceless wills, we would reply that Christ the Redeemer has by the right of birth and conquest a complete right of dominion over all things in this world. He claimed this right when he set up the ministry of Baptism. He thus gave into the hands of His Church first of all the right to rule those who were baptized, and also the right to baptize all those destined thereto by the privilege of their birth. And such are the children of the faithful, as taught by St. Paul. The Church has not actual authority over every man who comes into the world; but it has a potential power over all by virtue of the power bestowed by Christ, and the conferring of Baptism reduces that potentiality into an actuality. This principle, which St. Thomas[2] clearly lays down when dealing with the Person of the Saviour, was invoked by Leo XIII in the solemn act at the beginning of the new century, by which he claimed

[1] *Ep.*, xcviii.
[2] III[a], q. 59, a. 4, ad. 2[m].

the right to consecrate the human race to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. It was reaffirmed by His Holiness Pius XI in his encyclical on Christ the King. In the present matter it is applied in its fulness.

On the other hand, the Church does not overlook the fact that the children of infidels are entrusted by Divine Providence to the care of their parents; and she carefully abstains from interfering with the natural law. Accordingly she absolutely forbids the Baptism of those children who, by their birth, are not destined to be brought up Christians. Benedict XIV applied the ancient custom when he laid down explicitly that it was forbidden to baptize the children of Jewish parentage. Apart from the case of the proximate danger of death, when the parental right gives way to the inalienable right of the soul to its eternal heritage, no one has the right, under the pretext of performing a supernatural work, of overriding the natural right of the parents.[1]

It is otherwise with children born of Catholic parentage. By that very fact they are placed on the threshold of the Church. It is the duty of the parents to lead them therein, and to declare, at the baptismal font, the faith they will hand on to them as their best inheritance. These children thus will be baptized in the faith of the Church (*in fide Ecclesiæ*), or we may say, speaking more particularly, in the faith of the parents (*in fide parentum*). Dowered with supernatural gifts which are entirely gratuitous, they ought to appreciate them at their true value and not consider themselves free to

[1] In regard to a famous case in the time of Pius IX, see the article *Mortara* in the *Dictionnaire Apologétique.*

affront God. Whether they wish it or not they are under obligations from the fact that they have received this gift: the character of Baptism will remain even if it is disowned by the denial of the faith.

Quite a different question arises in regard to children not yet brought into the world, and still in the mother's womb. It must be admitted that a totally different reply is given, as far as the letter goes and to all appearances, by the old-time moralists on the one hand, and by the modern casuists on the other when they are asked: can the unborn babe be baptized whilst it is in the womb? The old scholastics unanimously said: no; the modern moral theologians unanimously say: yes. When we go to the root of the matter, the discrepancy arises not so much from any difference in doctrine, as the fact that the attitude to the question has been modified by the progress of the sciences of obstetrics and surgery.

When the old scholastics spoke of baptizing an unborn child they meant by that, baptizing the child through the mother, pouring the water on the body of the latter. Rightly they held that is impossible, since the mother and child are two distinct persons.[1] And often they added that, to be born again by grace, the child ought first to be born by nature, that is, it ought to have emerged from its mother's womb.

But when modern moralists speak of baptizing a child in its mother's womb, they mean to reach the child by a direct ablution, before it is born; and the experience of midwives and doctors goes to show that this is often possible. Modern casuists

[1] See St. Thomas, III, q. 68, a. ii.

approve this practice by which the child is freed from the danger of eternal death. And, in fact, the old scholastics approved of it also, when they were faced, in an exceptional case, by a similar contingency.[1]

There is therefore no change in doctrine, but only in phraseology, resulting from progress in medical science, which opens the way to a more extended application of old principles.

[1] See Roland Bandinelli (Alexander III), Sent., p. 199; Suarez In III, q. 68, a. ii, n. 2, ed. Paris, t. XX, p. 447 B.

CHAPTER V

THE EFFECTS OF BAPTISM

I. *The Witness of the New Testament*

THE Fathers and ecclesiastical writers have drawn out and developed the effects of Baptism in innumerable ways. All these developments are based on a small number of texts from Scripture; and it is enough to gather these texts together to realize the whole structure of the Christian teaching on this matter. But if the gathering together of these texts is not going to give a wrong idea of the revealed truth on this point, it ought to be done in such a way as to marshal them in the order of importance the different ideas conveyed.

1. The first and chief point, and the most profound, is the one given by our Lord when speaking to Nicodemus:[1] "Amen, amen I say to thee, unless a man is born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God." This idea of a second birth leads man to the realization of a life which is higher than the life of the senses and the merely natural life; it opens out to him the perspective of a life in God. To utter such a word is the prerogative of Him

[1] John iii. 5.

who is called the Alpha and the Omega, for such a word gives to us the beginning and the completion of the divine work wrought in us. The same idea, once part of the Christian heritage, is found in a great number of texts in the New Testament. Thus St. Paul writes:[1] "But when the goodness and kindness of God our Saviour appeared, not by the works of justice, which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the laver of regeneration, and renovation of the Holy Ghost, whom he hath poured forth upon us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour." And we read in St. Peter:[2] "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his great mercy hath regenerated us to a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." In many ways we are led to the same idea: we hear speak of divine adoption,[3] also of the renovation of the Holy Spirit,[4] and other variations of the same leading idea.

The word of our Lord gives us a depth of meaning which no commentary can sound. The adverb, "again" (Greek, anōthen), can convey the idea of a life which comes from a rebirth, or a life which comes from on high; the first idea is more in accord with the reply of Nicodemus; it is the meaning implied by the Vulgate and a number of the Fathers, but the second is equally warranted, and is supported by the language of the fourth gospel; it is adopted by other versions and other Fathers;

[1] Titus iii. 4-6.
[2] 1 Peter i. 3.
[3] John i. 12-13; Rom. viii. 15-16, 29; Gal. iii. 26-27; iv. 7; Titus iii. 7; 1 Peter 1-4; John iii. 1; v. 18.
[4] Matt. iii. 11; Mark i. 8; Luke iii. 16; John i. 33; Acts ii. 38; 1 Cor. vi. 11.

and there are some who combine both meanings harmoniously.

2. A second idea, peculiar to St. Paul, is that of the death and burial with Jesus Christ, followed by resurrection with Him:[1] "Know ye not that all we, who are baptized in Christ Jesus, are baptized in his death? For we are buried together with him by baptism into death: that as Christ is risen from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also may walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection. The same figures of speech are found in other passages of the Apostles set forth in various ways. Thus we read:[2] "For as many of you as have been baptized in Christ have put on Christ"; and again: "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable to his death, if by any means I may attain to the resurrection which is from the dead."

And again, the idea of the mystical body of Christ, as the principle of the unity of the faithful, comes to the fore:[3]

"For in one spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Gentiles, whether bond or free: and in one Spirit, we have all been made to drink. . . . Now you are the body of Christ, and members of member." "Careful to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. One body and one Spirit: as you are called in the one hope of your calling. One Lord, one faith,

[1] Rom. vi. 3-5.
[2] Gal. iii. 27; Phil. iii. 10, 11.
[3] 1 Cor. xii. 13, 27; Eph. iv. 3-6.

one baptism. One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in us all." Our Lord had already spoken of baptizing in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; He had said that the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit would come and make their abode in the faithful; but St. Paul gives a new turn to this doctrine of the body of Christ, the body mystical and living, into which the faithful are incorporated by Baptism. He returns to it again and again as the central point of Christianity.

3. The juridical idea of the Redemption finds its practical realization in the reception of Baptism: and this again is a commonplace of St. Paul. Sometimes he treats specifically of redemption as in the following:[1] "Being justified freely by grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus . . . every creature groaneth and travaileth in pain . . . but ourselves also, who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption of the sons of God, the redemption of our body." At another time there is question of the purification of the heart:[2] "Let us draw near with a true heart in fulness of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with clean water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering (for he is faithful that hath promised)." St. Peter echoes St. Paul when he writes: "Whereunto Baptism being of the like form, now saveth you also: not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the examination of a

[1] Rom. iii. 24; viii, 22, 23.
[2] Heb. x. 22, 23; 1 Pet. iii. 21.

good conscience towards God by the resurrection of Jesus Christ."

4. The idea of initiation and of illumination is found implied in other passages, in which the vocabulary of the New Testament approximates to that of the pagan mysteries. We ought not to be surprised at this. The explanation is to be found in certain superficial and general analogies. If on that account we sought to find a real kinship between the religion of the Gospel and the myths of Greece or Egypt we would be guilty of a false analogy on a huge scale.

As early as the occasion of the Sermon on the Mount we find these words of Christ:[1] "You are the light of the world. A city seated on a mountain cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel, but upon a candlestick, that it may shine to all that are in the house. So let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven." From the first page of the Gospel of St. John[2] this idea of the light of the world appears and reappears. We read: "That (the Word) was the true light, which enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, he gave them power to be made the sons of God, to them that believe in his name . . ." Without going all through the pages of this Gospel, we observe that Christ says in so many words:[3] "I

[1] Matt. v. 14-16.
[2] John i. 9-12.
[3] John viii. 12.

am the light of the world: he that followeth Me, walketh not in darkness, but shall have the light of life." The same idea is familiar to St. Paul and to St. Peter. St. Paul speaks of the light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ:[1] *ton photismon tou euaggeliou tes dozes tou Christou*, this light of the knowledge of the glory of God, which shines from the face of Christ, *photismon tes gnoseos tes dozes tou Theou en prosopo Christou*. This expression, all in perfect accord with the language of the prophets, was destined to describe the initiation of the Christian which he received at Baptism. In the second century we meet the term, *photismos*, applied to the Sacrament, in the writings of St. Justin, and then in those of Clement of Alexandria; and its use becomes universal in the third and fourth centuries. The employment of this term in Christian terminology is thus explained and justified by a development which is perfectly independent of other sources.

5. The idea of the seal—*sphragis*—which was also destined to have an important development, makes its appearance in the New Testament, at least as far as the word itself is concerned. Clearly it has not as yet been given that precise signification that it will have later on, but it clearly points towards the sacramental significance. We read, for instance, in the second Epistle to the Corinthians:[2] "Who (God) also hath sealed us, and given the pledge of the spirit in our hearts." And, again, in the Epistle to the Ephesians:[3] "In whom you also, after you had heard the word of truth (the gospel of your

[1] 2 Cor. iv. 4-6.
[2] 2 Cor. i. 22.
[3] Eph. i. 13-14; iv. 30.

salvation:) in whom also believing you were signed with the holy spirit of promise. Who is the pledge of our inheritance, unto the redemption of acquisition, unto the praise of his glory. . . . And grieve not the holy Spirit of God: whereby you are sealed unto the day of redemption." The word is found again in the Gospel of St. John, applied to the predestination with which Christ was sealed by God;[1] and the idea also recurs under various names in different books of the New Testament.[2]

Quite cognate to this, the metaphor of unction is also found to signify the effect of Baptism. St. Paul speaks of unction and of seal in the same context.[3] St. John reminds the faithful:[4] "But you have the unction from the Holy One, and know all things. . . . And as for you, let the unction which you have received from him abide in you. And you have no need that any man teach you: but as his unction teacheth you of all things . . ." When the faithful begin to be called Christians, a link is established in the minds of all, between this name which immediately calls Christ to mind,[5] and the unction of Baptism. Testimony is borne to this by Theophilus of Antioch as early as the second century.[6]

All these ideas and figures of speech, which are scattered through the New Testament, required only to be united in the baptismal catechism. The doctrine takes shape in the hands of the Fathers,

[1] John vi. 27; Rom. iv. 11; 2 Tim. ii. 19; Ap. vii. 2-8; ix. 4.
[2] Heb. i. 3; Apoc. xiii. 16, etc.
[3] 2 Cor. i. 21.
[4] 1 John ii, 20, 27.
[5] Acts iv. 27; x. 38; cf. xi. 26.
[6] *Ad Autolycum* i. 12.

and two separate ideas emerge which sum up the effects of Baptism: the sacramental grace, and the character.

II. *Sacramental Grace*

In order to obtain the complete fruits of Baptism we need to prepare our hearts. This preparation is the work of God, but we must co-operate. It is made up of two factors: faith and penance.

Certain Gnostics of the second century, like Menander and Elkesai, denied the necessity of this preparation, treating Baptism like a magical rite. Luther denied the special efficacy of Baptism, admitting only that of justifying faith. And by faith he did not mean the consent of the mind to revealed doctrine, but the faith of assurance, or in other words the belief of the Christian in his own justification. He said, moreover, that once justification was obtained it could be always recovered by the same means by which it was first got, and that a Christian is lost only by the sin of incredulity. We remember the words he addressed to Melanchthon[1] on the 1st of August 1521: *Pecca fortiter, sed fortius crede.* Calvin added that the grace of justification, grounded as it is on a completely gratuitous divine predestination, cannot be lost.[2]

In contrast to these idle dreams, the Catholic Church lays down that Baptism, when received with proper dispositions, brings about its effects in the soul by a power which is proper to itself. It is the

[1] *Letters*, ed. Enders, t. III, p. 208.
[2] *Inst. re. chr.*, III, xxi, 7; xxiv, 8.

doctrine of the *opus operatum*, that is the objective efficacy of the rite itself as distinct from the *opus operantis*, which is the special result of the subjective dispositions of the catechumen. These phrases, which are first used in the Schools in the twelfth century, hand on an ancient doctrine. The Church has always held that Baptism, when received with proper dispositions, brings about the complete remission of all sins, both original sin and actual sins. In regard to the guilt, the soul is purified of all guilt in the eyes of God; and as far as the punishment is concerned, the soul is no longer liable to any expiation at the hands of divine justice for sins committed before Baptism. On the other hand the Church has never taught that Baptism was an infallible guarantee against subsequent temptations, as Jovinian in the fourth century imagined, and as the Reformers of the sixteenth century were to repeat in their own way.

When the Precursor of Christ called the children of Israel to penance, and gave them his baptism, he did not claim to forgive sins, but only to dispose of them by an external profession of faith in the coming Christ and also a profession of penance for the remission of sins, which would be the work of Christ Himself. This is clear from his words, already quoted. Our Lord Himself, when He came from above, called also for faith and penance; He baptized by the hands of His disciples, but never did He separate the efficacy of Baptism from the moral dispositions necessary to ensure it, namely the dispositions of faith in the Gospel and the reform of morals:[1] "Repent and believe the gospel." That was the injunction. He pronounced

[1] Mark i. 15.

a malediction on impenitence:[1] "Woe to thee, Corozain, woe to thee, Bethsaida: for if in Tyre and Sidon had been wrought the miracles that have been wrought in you, they had long ago done penance in sackcloth and ashes." The very purpose of the gospel miracles was to call forth faith and lead to repentance; Baptism then put the seal on these dispositions.

The Apostles, in accordance with the command of the Master, did likewise. At first they were to teach, and to teach not only belief in the theoretical truths, but also the practice of moral duties, which involved the renouncing any past guilt. Then, and then only, were they to baptize. The fruit of Baptism was to be salvation for those who had kept inviolably or had recovered the grace received in Baptism. This is clear in the sermons of the Apostles. In the first sermon of St. Peter he replies to those who ask him: "What shall we do?" "Do penance, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of your sins: and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."[2]

The special grace of Baptism is the gift of the Holy Spirit, which makes us children of God.

The whole of Christian tradition echoes the injunction of the preaching of the Apostles. The catechisms of the Fathers, from the *De Baptismo* of Tertullian, make clear this twofold anxiety: to awaken faith by setting forth the proofs of the Divinity of Christ, and also to awaken sorrow for sin by the proclamation of the judgments of

[1] Matt. xi. 21.
[2] Acts ii. 37-38.

God. We have already seen that certain Fathers go to excess by requiring even in the minister of the sacraments those dispositions which, strictly speaking, can only be required of the recipient; but, at the same time, they never hesitate to demand it of the latter. We therefore see that the accusation of magic, so often brought against the Catholic doctrine of sacramental justification, is utterly without foundation. Properly speaking, a magical procedure is a course of action by which man claims to lay hold of the power of the divinity in order to constrain the deity to aid him in accordance with his own wishes. Such is not indeed, far from it, the purpose of the Church. The Church strives with all her might to get the catechumen to submit himself to the will of God, and not to put forward the claim to bend the divine power to his own ends. The fact that, from the earliest times, the catechumenate has been set up is clear evidence of this. And during this long-drawn-out period of testing, required from the time of the Fathers until to-day in pagan missions, souls are prepared by impressing on them the seriousness of the step they propose to take, as well as by training them in suitable spiritual exercises. We find in the Middle Ages Councils laying down laws in regard to the special guarantees required in the care of converts from Judaism. So far was the Holy See from urging missionaries amongst pagans to multiply baptisms lightly, that it has on many occasions, through the Roman Congregations, impressed upon them the necessity of a period of preparation and instruction before baptizing, and has laid down the minimum of truths to be believed, concerned all the time to ensure perseverance.

When these conditions are present, the grace of the Sacrament is received.

St. Paul gives us clearly enough to understand that the remission is complete, including both guilt and punishment. This he does when he sketches the parallel between the fall into original sin and the taking away of that sin:[1] "And where sin abounded, grace did more abound. That as sin hath reigned to death; so also grace might reign by justice unto life everlasting, through Jesus Christ our Lord. . . . There is now therefore no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." The conclusion has been clearly set forth by the Fathers. Tertullian[2] says: "Along with the guilt, the penalty is remitted; and thus man is restored to the likeness of Adam, who was himself created to the image of God. In Christian Tradition the difference has always been clearly noted between the easy and complete forgiveness obtained by Baptism (*appesis*, indulgentia), and the arduous remission obtained by the second repentance (*metanoia*, poenitentia). The Council of Trent stresses this difference in the following words:[3] "Justification by means of the Sacrament of Penance is to be obtained by those who fall into sin. It is the second plank of salvation after the shipwreck of grace, to use the exact phrase of the Fathers. . . . And so it is necessary to teach that the repentance of a Christian is very different from Baptismal repentance: it ought to include not only the giving up of sins and detestation of them . . . but also sacramental confession of sins, at least in desire, and absolution

[1] Rom. v. 20-21; viii. 1.
[2] *De Baptismo*, 5.
[3] Sess., vi., c. 14.

by the priest; as well as satisfaction by fasting, alms, prayers, and other spiritual exercises; not for the remission of eternal punishment which, either by the sacrament, or the desire of the sacrament, is always remitted with the guilt, but for the temporal punishment which, according to the teaching of Sacred Writ, is not always completely forgiven, as happens in Baptism . . ." This difference is emphasized by the Church in her treatment of the recipients of one or other of these two sacraments: in regard to the neophytes, who have received Baptism, no sacramental penance is imposed, satisfaction for their sins is taken as entirely paid for.

Baptism entails not only the cancelling of the whole of the past; it is also the pledge of actual help in the future. But God, whilst not forsaking His children, did not wish to interfere with the liberty of those who would choose to abandon Him. If one wants to try and find in Scripture that a man, once baptized, cannot subsequently sin, it is only by separating certain passages from their context and thus misconstruing them that the attempt can be made, whilst these verses are sufficiently explained by the general tenor of the New Testament.

In the fourth century a monk, named Jovinian, to justify a breaking away from the ascetic life, brought forward these words of St. John:[1] "Whosoever is born of God, committeth not sin: for his seed abideth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. . . . We know that whosoever is born of God, sinneth not; but the generation of God preserveth him, and the wicked one toucheth him not." St. Jerome controverted him by bring-

[1] John iii. 9; v. 18.

ing forward these words of the same epistle in contradiction:[1] "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just, to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all iniquity. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. . . . My little children, these things I write to you that you may not sin. But if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the just: And he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world. And by this we know that we have known him, if we keep his commandments." In the sixteenth century, Luther abused certain texts from St. Paul in connection with justification by faith, in order to reject good works. The Catholic controversialists proved to him the necessity of good works from every page of the Gospel, and the frequent testimonies of St. Paul, St. Peter and St. John. All the Fathers bear the same witness. Let it suffice to mention among the most primitive in the second century, first of all Hermas, who, writing at Rome a treatise on penance, stressed nothing so much as the necessity of carefully guarding the innocence restored by Baptism; then we have the author of the second Epistle of Clement, impressing on the neophytes the importance of keeping the flesh pure and the seal of Baptism inviolate, if they wished to obtain eternal life; and finally, we have St. Justin, also writing in Rome, in his Dialogue with Tryphon, these words, which are the strongest condemnation of the Lutheran error:[2] "Happy is the man to

[1] 1 John i. 9-10; ii. 1-3.
[2] Dialogue, 141.

whom God does not impute his sin (Psalm xxxi. 2). He is the man who, having done penance for his sins, has obtained pardon of them from God; and does not think it sufficient, as you along with some others fondly imagine, for sinners to know God, in order that the Lord should not impute their sin to them."

Nevertheless the Fathers, who had the heavy responsibility of preparing people for Baptism, were to encounter, in the course of their ministry, more than one case where the will to receive was in doubt. They knew, for instance, even in the case of Simon the magician, as recorded in the Acts, that, amongst the candidates for Baptism, you might have some who were unworthy. They had, therefore, to ask themselves what happened to the sacrament in a case like that. Doubtless they found some difficulty in replying. The first Fathers who encountered the difficulty, like Tertullian in his work *De Poenitentia*, gave only an incomplete and vague reply. The solution was to become clear only in the course of centuries.

In order to describe the attitude of deception on the part of these catechumens in simulating fervour in order to obtain Baptism, the Latin Fathers found in the Old Testament (Wisdom i. 5) a suitable expression. They spoke of simulating, *fictio; ficte accedere*. These words, which occur very often in the works of St. Augustine, were adopted by St. Thomas and all the scholastics. As it is possible to have more than one kind of simulation, the sacrament can be frustrated in a more or less degree.[1] In the case where it amounts to a

[1] St. Augustine, *De Baptismo contra Donatistas*, V, liii. 101; St. Thomas, III[a], q. 69, a. 9.

complete refusal of the Sacrament, then the Sacrament is null. But the more usual case is where the person simulating comes to receive the Sacrament with a guilty conscience.

We already understand that Baptism, once received validly, cannot be repeated. On that point the tradition of the Church was fixed, and did not make an exception even in the case where Baptism was received dishonestly with a bad conscience. The sinner who repented after a Baptism of this kind could not be rebaptized: he belonged to the Church. They did not look upon his case as hopeless; but they considered that the Sacrament, received criminally and dishonestly, could, through penance, begin to be efficacious. This is what modern theologians have, using an expression only fairly apt, called the "revival of the Sacrament." The phrase is comparatively modern, but the idea is not; it is found often in St. Augustine, and from him the scholastics took it.

St. Augustine writes in his treatise on Baptism against the Donatists:[1]

"Granting that the sins of this simulator are not forgiven, the question I ask is this: supposing that later on he confesses his dishonesty with a contrite heart, full of real sorrow, do you believe he ought to be rebaptized? Such a course would be madness, would it not? Therefore it is admitted that a man can receive Christ's Baptism, even though his heart, through malice or sacrilege, should bar the forgiveness of sins. And so it is considered that men can be baptized in communions separated from the Church, when the Baptism of Christ is given and received according to the approved rite. Such a

[1] *De Baptismo contra Donatistas*, I, xii, 18.

Baptism will begin to be effective when the recipient has been reconciled to the unity of the Church, and thus freed himself from the sacrilege of schism, which was the cause of his sins being retained, and which prevented their forgiveness. And so the simulator is not rebaptized, but is purified by a dutiful amendment and a sincere confession. This could not happen without Baptism, for in this case the gift, previously received, begins to be efficacious for salvation when the simulation is forgiven by a sincere confession. Therefore, we ought not to rebaptize the man who amends and comes back to the Communion and unity of the Church, although such a man has received the Baptism of Christ, as retained by heretics or schismatics in face of the charity and peace of Church, where his guilt and sacrilege have barred the forgiveness of sin. The reason is that the fact of the reconciliation and peace received bring it about that the Sacrament, received without any fruit in schism, begins to bear fruit in the unity of the Church for the remission of his sins."

This passage, and other similar ones, which we could easily multiply, bear witness to the fact of a well-grounded conviction in the mind of St. Augustine, as well as to the practice of the Church. The complete effect of Baptism then is made up of two elements: one element produced only in those who are well disposed, namely, the grace of the Sacrament; another element produced in the souls of those desirous to receive the Sacrament, although at the time they are not capable of profiting by it, namely, the sacramental character, to which we will revert later on. The ill-will was an obstacle to the reception of grace there and then. But, as St.

Thomas remarks,[1] the Sacrament is the work of God and not of man: that is why it persists, ready to act in the soul marked with its seal, when the obstacle disappears.

The conclusion is that an obstacle, placed to the giving of grace by a will gravely culpable, is the cause of the accidental barrier to the full effect of the Sacrament.

The doctrine of the revival of the Sacrament of Baptism, in regard to its essential effect, is a doctrine which is theologically certain, being unanimously received in the Church. But we must also admit a revival of the Sacrament in regard to its secondary effects. We will now treat of the principle which guides us in this matter.

No one can appear before God and enjoy the beatific vision, without having laid aside all affection to sin. But the catechumen who receives Baptism with real attrition for his grave sins, but having still some affection to them which is venially culpable, does not fulfil this condition. It would seem therefore that, if a man were to die after such a Baptism, he cannot appear before the face of God. And yet, the general principle remains: Baptism takes away the guilt and punishment of sin. We are therefore driven to the following solution. All the debt of sin is paid in full from the point of view of right; as a matter of fact, the soul finds itself impeded in its journey to God by the weight of this affection which is venially culpable, and which clings to it still. But, on its departure from this life, there is a total change brought about by the

[1] IIIª, q. 69, a. 10, ad 1m. The Sacrament of Baptism is the work of God and not of man, and so it is not dead in the case of one baptized without charity.

influence of the new environment: the soul penetrates the region of perfect charity; it lays aside through that the burden that keeps it back. Thenceforth the Baptism, which it has received, recovers all its power to cancel the penalty due to sins for which expiation has not been made. And, therefore, there is nothing to prevent the soul appearing immediately before God, by right of the Baptism it had received. There we have then a case of revival.[1]

In every way the ancient tradition of the Church bears witness to the inherent efficacy of the Sacrament, an efficacy which can be impeded by the evil will of man, but which remains all the same ready to be brought into action according as it is aided by the will of man. This is the doctrine of the *opus operatum*, the stumbling-block to Luther and all the advocates of subjective justification by faith without good works. The Church nevertheless laid down this ancient doctrine, and the Council of Trent wished to make it secure by an explicit anathema:[2] "If anyone says that the Sacraments of the New Law do not confer grace of themselves, but that only faith in the divine promise suffices to obtain the grace, let him be anathema." What precedes that shows sufficiently that the teaching of the Church, far from lowering the Divine Sacrament by reducing it to the status of a magical rite and handing over all its effect to the discretion of man, makes clear the imprescriptible dignity and complete independence of the divine operation. Even in the

[1] Teaching hinted at by St. Thomas. *De Malo*, q. VII, Art. II at end. Cf. Billot, *De Sacramentis*, t. XIV, p. 107.

[2] Session, VIII, *De Sacramentis in genere*, Canon 8.

hands of the guilty, the Sacrament remains divine, and brings about its particular effects if it finds a subject worthy of such, and in proportion to its worthiness.

III. *The Character of the Sacrament*

The preceding considerations have made abundantly clear the two elements which together make up the complete effect of Baptism: the sacramental grace, which is given only to those who are properly disposed by faith and penance; and the character, impressed on all who receive the Sacrament, no matter what are their interior dispositions. Of these two elements, the first of itself alone is operative of salvation: namely, the participation of the divine nature, the gift of sanctifying grace, the seed of eternal glory. The second is the immediate and essential effect of the Sacrament; of itself it is not always crowned by the gift of grace, but calls out for it. In order to find a description for this rough outline of the divine work, which stops at the impression of the character without going beyond it, the Church has coined the phrase: "A Sacrament valid, but *informatum.*" The documents setting forth the teaching of the Church have consecrated this name by a usage dating from the thirteenth century.

Many controversies ensued before this point was drawn out clearly in theology. The grave misunderstandings which broke out in the third century between Catholic bishops in regard to the validity of Baptism given outside the Church, arose exactly because of widespread ignorance and powerlessness

to draw out clearly the idea of the sacramental character. St. Cyprian was ignorant of this idea, and Pope Stephen, in his rescript laying down his orders, did not know how to bring out the explanation which could have brought peace to all.

Nevertheless the doctrine of the character was to be found in germ in Scripture and in the practice of the Church. The case of Simon Magus,[1] coming to be baptized with an unworthy intention, opened out the question. Simon not only submitted himself to the rite performed by the Apostles, but he had the ambition to be allowed to take part in their glorious ministry. And Peter, whilst impressing on him the duty of asking God for the grace of conversion, raised no doubt as to his qualification as a Christian. In explaining the theological bearing of this event recourse ought to be had to the distinction between the two elements which result from the Sacrament fruitfully received. We ought to say the same about the explanation which is called for by the sixth chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews. It concerns the delusion which was nursed by those who fell back after having received Baptism. Having done so they thought that it was impossible to return, and also impossible to bank upon a future Baptism. The reason was because the mark of the first Baptism remained.

The word *sphragis*, or signaculum, which is often used for the mark imprinted on soldiers by their leader, and for that placed on the sheep by the shepherd, had already been used in the Septuagint in reference to circumcision. Quite naturally it suggested itself as a suitable term to describe the

[1] Acts viii. 9-24.

immediate and indelible effect of Baptism.[1] We see how St. Paul suggested the idea: it was soon followed up. From the second century, the word *sphragis* occurs constantly to denote the work of Baptism. It has not as yet an exact connotation, since the doctrine was not completely developed. At times it stood primarily for the material rite, as in this passage of Hermas:[2]

"So long as man bears not the title of the Son of God, he is dead; but, when he receives the seal, he puts aside death and receives life. The seal is the water (of Baptism); he descends into it dead, he emerges from it living. Such will also hear the proclamation of the seal, and will respond to it, in order to enter into the Kingdom of God." But elsewhere there is question of the spiritual effect. Abercius, the Bishop of Hieropolis in Phrygia, saw at Rome people who bore on their persons a brilliant seal:[3] *Laon d'eidon ekei lampran sphrageidan echonta.* St. Ignatius of Antioch uses the word *character* for the impress which Christ lays on the soul.[4]

"There are two coins, that of God and that of the world; each bears a special effigy: the unbelievers bear the effigy of this world; the believers wear in love the effigy of God the Father by Jesus Christ. We must be prepared with His assistance to die, united to His passion; otherwise, His life is not in us."

The elements of a theological synthesis existed

[1] See the excellent monograph of Fr. J. Doelger, *Sphragis*. Paderborn. 1911.

[2] *Pastor*, Sim. IX, 16, 3-4.

[3] Text in the *Dict. Apologétique*, article, *Epigraphic*, col. 1436.

[4] Ad. Magn., 5, 2.

scattered up and down when St. Augustine came on the scene. St. Augustine distinguished the *de jure* effect of the Sacrament and the *de facto* result. By that means he reconciled the theory of St. Cyprian in regard to the Church with the objective value of the Sacrament as the work principally of Christ, the High Priest of the New Law. *De jure*, the sacraments are the possessions of the Church, and the channels of the spiritual gifts which the Church administers; *de facto*, they can exist, it may be at times outside the Church or in a manner so as not to carry grace to the soul which is unfitted to receive it. In these cases there will be nevertheless true sacraments, which will leave a mark on the soul by the impression of a character. Thus through St. Augustine, the doctrine of the character found its way into Christian theology.

In the works of Peter Lombard, we do not find the name of the sacramental character, but we find the thing.[1]

We find these expressions, and moreover the name of the character, in the decretal of Innocent III, dated the year 1201. We will quote the words which have already been commented on above.[2]

"Some people, not without reason, distinguish between the unwilling and the unwilling, the coerced and the coerced. On the one hand he who is brought violently by threats and punishments and receives baptism to escape harm is in the same category as one who comes for baptism under false colours, and receives the character of Christianity on his soul. . . . But he who does not consent, but

[1] *Sent.*, IV, 4, 1.
[2] Cf. p. 60.

goes on rejecting the Sacrament receives neither the grace of the Sacrament (*res*) nor the character, because it is a greater obstacle to expressly reject than not to consent . . ."

And therefore in the thirteenth century men already realized the double effect of the Sacrament.

Alexander of Hales has at his disposal the complete theological nomenclature, and the term *character* has the significance of a sign ordained for the production of grace. St. Thomas luminously draws out the doctrine of the character.[1]

The Sacraments of the New Law are ordained to serve two ends: to bring a remedy for sin, and to perfect the soul with a view to the performance of acts of divine service in accordance with the rule of the Christian life. Whoever receives a special investiture is marked out for this office by means of a sign: thus soldiers in days gone by, who were called to the service of arms, received certain bodily investitures in keeping with their office in the corporal order. And so men receive through certain sacraments a spiritual investiture relating to the carrying out of the service of God: in this way the faithful are sealed by such sacraments with a spiritual character.

This spiritual investiture gives us the clue to the nature of the character. The carrying out of God's service entails the receiving of certain divine gifts or the handing them on to others. For both functions we are qualified by the reception of either a passive or an active power. This is exactly the effect of the character: it qualifies us by imparting a passive or active capacity in the instrumental order. This capacity emanates from the priesthood

[1] III[a], q. 63.

of Christ: thus the sacramental character itself is a participation in that priesthood.

As the character is imparted with a view to action, it has its place in the operative faculties of the soul, and not in its substance. Since it flows from the priesthood of Christ, it shares the eternity of that priesthood: the soul, thus sealed, remains consecrated for ever just like an altar. By means of the Baptismal character, the Christian is made capable of receiving the other sacraments of the Church. The soul is able to receive still other special investitures by means of the Sacraments of Confirmation and Orders. These investitures are given once and for always like that of Baptism. The three Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Orders cannot be repeated; they are the three Sacraments which impress a character.

By this piece of supernatural psychology, drawn out by analysing the nature of a character, the Angel of the Schools has striven with all his might to enable us to get some idea of the permanent effect of Baptism. In taking possession of the soul, God seals it with an indelible stamp: *Signum spirituale et indelibile*, as the Council of Trent will repeat. The Council anathematizes anyone who rejects the doctrine of the indelible character given in this life; that is the immediate object of its declaration. But can we hold that God's claim over us is any the less imprescriptible in the life to come? That cannot be held without extreme rashness. In accordance with the common opinion of the Church, the character of the Sacrament remains to enhance the glory of the elect, and to add to the confusion of the lost. For ever the Christian remains a Christian, and the priest remains a priest.

This teaching of the Council of Trent conveys the idea of an objective reality which is unassailable. The view held by Scotus and Durandus, who have tried to account for the sacramental character by describing it as a mere extrinsic title, does not sufficiently fit in with the mind of the Church.

Protestants could not realize at all the doctrine of the character, and have often put it forward as the mere invention of Innocent III. It is true to say that Innocent III was the first to clearly envisage what was to be found in the official documents of the Church. But this teaching has behind it a quite honourable past, especially in the tradition of the West, as well as a firm basis in Scripture. Besides, it gives us the necessary ground-work on which to found the fact of the revival of the Sacraments.

Against the teaching in regard to the Baptismal character we are not justified in objecting because the case of the minister of Baptism is different from that of Orders: in so far as the episcopal character is required for the ordaining of priests, whilst no character is needed to make Christians. This objection falls to the ground, because there is no parallel between the two institutions. Orders gives an active power: in the case of every priest to consecrate the Eucharist, and in the case of a bishop to ordain priests. The effect of Baptism is to give the Christian the passive power to receive the other sacraments of the Church. Its precise effect is not to enable a man to give Baptism, because the conferring of Baptism is normally reserved to priests, and, in case of necessity, can be given even by a pagan. Baptism lies at the foundation of the Christian edifice; and therefore

we can consider the subsequent characters given by Confirmation and Orders as merely modifications of the character of Baptism.

IV. *The Metaphysical Analysis of Sacramental Causality*

We have already seen that the sacrament works *ex opere operato*, that is by a power inherent in the rite, on the sole condition that it is not barred by an opposing will. In order to completely elucidate this expression, which is often misrepresented, we will review the various systems set forth by Catholic theologians, in their effort to give a reasonable explanation. It will be necessary to endeavour to proceed a little into this region of mystery, which is the metaphysic of the sacrament.

In the minds of all Catholic theologians, a sacrament is a divine operation in virtue of the primary source from which it proceeds, that is the virtue from on high. It is besides a divine work through the personal intervention of Christ, from whom we receive all grace. And yet immediately it is a human work. At this point the various systems begin. We can reduce them to four principal ones.

1. *The system of occasional causality*.—A kind of pre-established harmony is set forth between the sacramental rite and the work of grace, based on Christ's will to save us. Man pours the water and says the words of the sacrament; whilst at the same time, God or His Anointed gives the sanctifying grace.

This explanation is given by St. Bernard; also, after him—but with many slight modifications—

St. Bonaventure, Duns Scotus and the general run of Franciscan Doctors; there are others too, like Durandus, who gave a particularly bold interpretation of this theory. And finally, we have the Nominalist School.

2. *The system of disposing causality.*—The upholders of this system have specially stressed the relation which exists between the two effects of the sacrament: the character, which calls forth the grace; and the grace which is in conformity with the requirements of the character. In the interrelation between these two terms an ingenious edifice has been erected. The sacrament by its own peculiar power produces the character immediately; it does not produce the grace, which is a thing with an essence much more elusive. But by producing the character, it develops that disposition which, through the promise of Christ, evokes grace, so long as the person does not positively put an obstacle in the way. It was the consideration of the three Sacraments which give a character—Baptism, Confirmation and Orders—that first prompted the idea of this system; the theory is not very difficult to apply to the sacraments which, whilst they give no character, entail the need of lasting help, namely Marriage and Extreme-Unction; with much greater difficulty the attempt has been made to apply the principle to Penance and the Eucharist.

The general lines of the system are found in Alexander of Hales[1] and St. Bonaventure; St.

[1] Summa, p. 4, q. 5, m. 4, a. 5: The sacraments are causes of an effect on the soul, not only I say by disposing the soul, but by bringing about the effect: they affect the soul by simply imprinting a character, and investing it. Hence I say that all the sacraments in

Thomas, in his early writings, is inclined to it. In our own days Cardinal Billot has revived it by a presentation of his own.

3. *The system of moral causality.*—In the Gospel one has read that our Lord by the merits of His Passion has saved the world, and completed the work of our redemption in so far as the source of it is concerned. One has also read in the Gospel that Baptism and the Eucharist are like streams of grace flowing from Calvary as their source (John xix. 34). They have therefore chosen to consider the sacraments in general either as divine actions which come to us, full of the virtue from on high, consecrated by the Passion of Christ, rich with the gifts of the Holy Spirit; or as a kind of bills of exchange drawn on the merits of Christ. On such a foundation, quite firm as it is, has been built up a synthesis of the work of our salvation.[1]

The synthesis is found often in the Fathers, both Greek and Latin as well. All the scholastics, including St. Thomas, draw it out at length. When we come to the sixteenth century we see it set forth to the exclusion of every other theory. This new state of things was the work of Melchior Canus. Many modern theologians have followed, as a rule

some way adorn the soul, either by impressing a character or by sealing it in another way. And the sacraments are the efficient cause of this adornment or seal.

[1] III[a], q. 62, a. 5 : It is clear that the sacraments of the Church have in a special way virtue from the Passion of Christ, where power is conveyed to us by the reception of the sacraments; and as a sign of this, water and blood flowed from the side of Christ on the cross, the water pointing to Baptism, the blood to the Eucharist, these being the most powerful sacraments.

modifying it by considerations outside the system which Melchior Canus set forth as complete in itself. Amongst these theologians we meet Thomists, a large number of Jesuits, and most of the Scotists since the Council of Trent.

4. *The theory of physical causality.*—The upholders of this theory have read in the Gospel the words of Christ to Nicodemus: "It is necessary to be born again of water and the Holy Ghost," and have interpreted in the strictest possible manner this description of the sacramental operation, the Holy Spirit being the principal cause, and the washing with the water the instrumental cause. And again do not we find St. Paul speaking of the bath of regeneration and renovation by the Holy Spirit, and again of the bath which purifies in the water by the word? Many of the Fathers have reproduced, in similar terms, these words of St. Augustine: "Whence does the water get the power to purify the heart by touching the body? Is it not from the word which operates not by the mere sound, but by the faith? Just as, in the word itself, the sound that passes is one thing, the power is another thing and that remains."

Many of the scholastics have adopted this theory. Some of them have confined themselves to it, whilst others, like St. Thomas, have linked this system up with the previous one.[1] This is the procedure of

[1] III[a], q. 62, a. 4: In laying down that the sacrament is an instrumental cause of grace, it is necessary to lay down at the same time that there is in the Sacrament a certain power instrumental in bringing about the sacramental effect. And this power is proportionate to the instrument. Hence it bears the same relation to the absolute and perfect power of anything as the instrument bears to the principal agent. And an

many Thomists and theologians of every school. The exposition of this theory admits besides of varieties sufficiently marked: some make claim to a kind of accidental power added to the operation which belongs to the material agent; others, like Cajetan, reject this idea.

The teaching of the Church, whilst it is perfectly clear on the fact of the *opus operatum*, leaves the explanation of it undecided. The Catechism of the Council of Trent thus expresses itself:[1]

(" Among the effects of the sacraments,) the first place is given to that grace which we call, to use a term consecrated by the usage of the holy Doctors, justifying. This is what the Apostle taught us when he says: Christ also loved the Church, and delivered Himself up for it: that He might sanctify it, cleansing it by the laver of water in the word of life (Eph. v. 25-26). How a thing so great and wonderful is produced by the sacrament when, in the well-known words of St. Augustine, the water flows on the body and reaches to the heart: that surpassed the reason and understanding of man. For we must hold that no being falling under the senses has the power, by its own native capacity, to penetrate into the soul. But we know, by the light of faith, that the power of God Almighty is present in the sacraments, in order to give them the power to bring about what the natural elements would be incapable of accomplishing by themselves."

instrument operates only in so far as it is moved by a principal agent which operates *per se;* and so the power of the principal agent has an existence passing from one thing to another and is incomplete; as the motion too is an imperfect act from the agent to the being acted upon.

[1] II, 1, 25.

How far each of the various systems outlined above can account for the sacramental effect, we will endeavour to show in a few words.

1. *Occasional causality*.—This system fails in its objective: for the pre-established harmony, which it invokes with no other factor, destroys the efficacy belonging to the sacrament, leaving only the operation proper to God, who acts immediately on the soul on the occasion of the sacrament being given. In a word, this system does not imply any causality properly so called, which, in keeping with the teaching of the Church, constitutes the essential difference between the Sacraments of the New Law and those of the Old. On that account it is difficult not to detect a serious omission.

2. *Disposing causality*.—This system provides a suitable scheme by which we can explain the working of the sacraments which give a character, and more particularly the cases of the revival of the sacraments. It admits of application without undue violence to the two sacraments whose operation presents a certain analogy with that of the sacraments which give a character; it does not admit of adaptation to Penance and the Eucharist. In so far as it claims to be applicable to all the Sacraments of the New Law, it is an effort at synthesis somewhat forced; and we cannot say that such a synthesis is *a priori* lawful, for there is no obligation to hold that the Sacraments of the New Law are of one special type, seeing that such a position is partially impossible in two of the sacraments. We can also object on the score that this explanation is urged in order to account for a point of little importance, namely the genesis of the character, whilst leaving aside the question of

great importance, the production of sacramental grace.

3. *Moral causality*.—This system, well grounded in Scripture and Tradition, gives us an explanation, which satisfies us to a certain extent, of the divine economy in the sacraments. It is much less certain that it gives us a complete explanation, for it is based on the idea of merit, an idea juridical and moral, and omits the idea of efficient causality properly so called, which is sufficiently clearly envisaged in the teachings of the faith. It manifests then a deficiency grave enough, which the following system ought to supply.

4. *Physical causality*.—This system, in no way contrary to the preceding one, has only to be united to it in order to complete it, by presenting the sensible rite as re-enforced by divine omnipotence in order to produce grace. It involves the element of mystery; but who can wonder if we encounter mystery in the work of our supernatural regeneration.

It would seem therefore that the conclusion we come to in regard to the causality of the sacraments is that the theory of physical causality should be harmoniously united to that of the theory of moral causality. This fusion has been in different ways brought about by many theologians following the lead of St. Thomas.

CHAPTER VI

THE NECESSITY OF BAPTISM

I. *The Necessity of Precept and of Means*

SINCE Baptism is by Christ's institution the normal means of salvation, it remains for us to examine the consequences of this ordinance, particularly in regard to those souls who have been deprived of Baptism of water by invincible ignorance or some other reason. At the very outset, let us expound the two kinds of necessity, the necessity which arises from a precept and the necessity of means.

One law is supreme in the whole question, a law which admits of no exception: namely, that there is not, and never was salvation for fallen man save by faith in the Redeemer. In the Acts we read:[1] "Neither is there salvation in any other. For there is no other name under heaven given to men, whereby we must be saved." These are the words of St. Peter to the Sanhedrin. St. Paul writes in the same strain to Corinth:[2] "For other foundation no man can lay but that which is laid: which is Christ Jesus." These words of the New Covenant are an echo of those of the Old and serve as an explanation. In

[1] Acts iv. 12.
[2] 1 Cor. iii. 11.

Genesis Abraham is praised for having believed in the promise of God, in whose posterity all the nations of the earth were to be blessed.[1] This necessity for faith in the Redeemer extended beyond the confines of the Mosaic Law, and opened out a way of salvation to the Gentiles. St. Augustine bears testimony to this tradition,[2] and St. Thomas does likewise:[3] "The Old Law did not suffice to bring men to salvation: but there was in existence another help given by God to men along with the Law, and which led them to Salvation: it was faith in a Mediator, by that the Fathers of old were justified, as we ourselves are justified. Thus God did not leave men deprived of the means of salvation."

The outstanding new factor brought in by the New Testament is that the faith, which avails for salvation, is that faith alone which is given by Baptism. At first sight we would conclude that by the institution of Baptism the ways of salvation were diminished. As a matter of fact, the restriction is to a great extent compensated for by the revelation of Jesus Christ, and by the facilities given to all believers for salvation by the power of the sacrament.

But at what precise time in history did the Mosaic observances lose their power, and when did Baptism supplant circumcision in the rôle it played in regard to the children of Israel? On that point a controversy was waged, in the closing years of the fourth century and the opening years of the fifth century, between St. Jerome and St. Augustine.

[1] Genesis xv. 6.
[2] *Ep.*, CLXXXVII.
[3] Ia IIae q. 98 a. 2 ad. 4m.

St. Jerome argued that the two divine economies were sharply divided by the Passion of our Lord; whilst St. Augustine, with a greater show of reason, held that there was an intermediate period, during which the Mosaic observances, fallen into desuetide *de jure*, yet maintained their power for those to whom the light of the Gospel had not yet penetrated.

From the time that the Law of the Gospel attained vigour, Baptism became necessary with a twofold necessity: namely, with a necessity of precept for all who knew the definite command of our Lord; and with a necessity of means for all men.

The words of our Lord, commissioning the Apostles to preach and baptize, are the groundwork of the necessity of precept.[1] St. Peter and St. Paul confirm these words,[2] by pointing to Baptism of water as the sign by which we belong to the universal Church, and as the one ark of salvation, and the one spouse of Christ. The very name of Apostle indicates this mission, and the Gospel story tells of various ways by which our Lord prepared men for the universal commission; the words by which He enjoined His Apostles to limit themselves for the time being to the evangelization of Israel, are found side by side with the other words which speak of an unlimited outlook. It is true that He Himself declared that He was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel; the Chananean woman had to importune Him to obtain a miracle.[3] But, in praising the faith of this woman, He made it

[1] Matt. xxviii. 19.
[2] 1 Peter i. 3; Eph. v. 26.
[3] Matt. xv. 21-28.

sufficiently clear that the believers of every race would find grace with His Father, and that the time would come when His Apostles would widen the ambit of their preaching. And besides, He clearly indicated that He does not exclude the Gentiles: witness this in the reception given to the centurion at Capharnaum, in the parable of the wedding feast, and in that of the murderous keepers of the vineyard. Still more clearly He shows it in His great discourse on the end of the world, and His own second coming. The words: "Teach all nations," imply no special acceptation of Jews or Gentiles. No one can question the fact that the preaching of St. Paul is replete with this universalist outlook; but certain critics have given credit to St. Paul for this revolutionary idea, by laying down, with more or less assurance, that Christ never envisaged the evangelization of the Gentiles, or at least did not command it. Read impartially no texts warrant such an interpretation; it comes from a preconceived idea, namely: Christ did not institute the Church, He did not even think of it, such an idea could not have entered into His mind without committing an anachronism. Therefore, when confronted with all the texts that imply an ecclesiastical or sacramental development, they simply cut the argument short by the answer: not proven. This is not the place to show the injustice of such an attitude. We will merely lay down that the most ancient tradition of the Fathers show the Church engaged on this universal mission, and that twenty years after the death of Christ it is to be found already stated in the Epistles of St. Paul.

The teaching given to Nicodemus establishes the

necessity of means of Baptism of water.[1] Following on this statement of this primitive teaching, the Pelagian heresy comes, at the outset of the fifth century, to give it the vigour of actuality, and to call forth new clearness of exposition. The Fathers are not content to quote the command of Christ to His Apostles; they go back to the statement made to Nicodemus, in order to show that it admits of no exceptions. They mark the echo of this teaching in St. Paul:[2] "Faith then cometh by hearing: and hearing by the word of Christ. But I say: Have they not heard? Yes, verily, their sound hath gone forth into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the whole world." A new argument from Scripture is found in St. Augustine, who probably first used it to combat the Pelagian objection. It is known that the Pelagians made a distinction between the Kingdom of Heaven and eternal life; that they admitted that Baptism was necessary to enter the Kingdom of Heaven, but said it was not necessary for eternal life. St. Augustine sought for an argument *ad hominem* to silence his adversaries, and he considered that it was to be found in the sixth chapter of St. John. This passage deals directly with the Eucharist, and not directly with Baptism; to those who did not eat of the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, it declares that they have not life in them.[3] Here then is the argument he is looking for. To have life in oneself, and therefore to live for ever, it is necessary to eat the flesh of Christ and drink His blood. But to eat the flesh of Christ and drink

[1] John iii.
[2] Rom. x. 17-18.
[3] John vi. 53-54.

His blood, it is necessary to be baptized: the flesh and blood of Christ cannot be given to one who is not baptized. Therefore Baptism is necessary not only to enter the Kingdom of Heaven, but to live for ever. This argument is enough to destroy the distinction made by the Pelagians. St. Augustine does not fail to restate it;[1] Pope Innocent I takes it from him;[2] later tradition echoes it.

In regard to the nations who had not received the Gospel the Fathers granted them the benefit of invincible ignorance. It was not long before it was doubted whether there were still such nations. Origen and St. John Chrysostom easily persuaded themselves that the Gospel had penetrated to the confines of the habitable world. St. Augustine, who was in touch with the barbarous peoples in Africa, shows himself more accurately informed.[3] But in the Middle Ages people lost sight of the idea of lands not yet evangelized. In the twelfth century Hugh of Saint-Victor gave expression to a widespread error when he wrote:[4] "When the preaching of the Apostles brought to a man the words which commanded the institution, then it becomes obligatory to accept the institution meant for all. In regard to those who are living away in places almost unknown, and who depart before they have heard perhaps of the divine institution, I think that they ought to be judged as we would those who lived before ever it was instituted either

[1] *De peccatorum meritis et remissione*, I, xx, 26-28; I, xxiv, 34; III, iv, 7-8; *Ep.* clxxxvi, 8-29, etc.
[2] *Ep.* clxxxii, 5, in the collection of St. Augustine.
[3] *De natura et gratia*, II, 2.
[4] *De sacramentis Christianæ fidei*, II, vi. 5.

among the Gentiles, or under the Law: for what the time factor produced in these latter, the factor of place brought about in the former. If anyone proves so intransigent as to hold that there still exist such people in unknown and remote parts of the world who have not as yet heard the divine command in regard to Baptism, I have no hesitation in saying that either such a person does not exist, or if perchance there is such an one, then he has put himself by his own fault out of the way of being instructed and is inexcusable; seeing that the Scripture declares quite clearly (Psalm xviii. 5): Their sound hath gone forth into all the earth: and their words unto the ends of the world."

If we want to get an exact idea of the new situation of mankind created by the offer of salvation by the Gospel, we ought, with St. Augustine, to examine them individually and also collectively.[1] In regard to individuals, the command to receive Baptism binds at the very moment it is raised by the preaching of Baptism as a matter of conscience. In regard to masses of men taken together the answer is different and the question cannot be solved in so exact a manner. Before the sixteenth century it was possible that the common belief should be that the Gospel had been promulgated to the whole world, and that the ancient economy and the means of salvation placed at the disposal of all by that economy were absolutely abrogated. From the sixteenth century, with the discoveries of the great navigators, such an opinion seemed untenable. Multitudes of people had just been found to whom the Gospel

[1] *De diversis questionibus*, 83, q. 44; *De vera religione*, 25, 46.

was as though non-existent. To hold that the coming of the Saviour had restricted the possibilities of salvation for these people, cut off from all known contact with the revelation of Christ, seemed in opposition to the workings of Divine Providence. From that time it was the common opinion of theologians that, in regard to lands untouched by the Gospel, their position remained unchanged until the promulgation of the Gospel among them was, morally speaking, accomplished, and these countries could be put on the same footing as lands on which the light of Christ had long shone. Until that day dawned, the benefit of a sacrament of nature, which the Church's tradition has always admitted, could not be denied to such places. In regard to the sacrament of nature we can appeal to the testimony of St. Augustine[1] and St. Thomas.[2]

In regard to a Christian country, the rule of the twofold obligation of precept and of means has been acknowledged for a long time; the Church's documents leave no room for doubt. Listen to the essential condition for justification as laid down by the Council of Trent.[3]

"The justification of the guilty is the passing from the state in which he is born as a child of Adam, to the state of grace and of adoption of children of God, by the second Adam, Jesus Christ, our Saviour. Since the promulgation of the Gospel, this transition is impossible without the laver of regeneration, or the desire of it, according to the Scripture (John iii. 5)."

[1] *Ep.*, clxxxvii, 11, 34 (*Ad. Dardanum*).
[2] III[a], q. 60 a. 5 ad. 3[m]; q. 61 a. 3 ad. 2[m].
[3] *Session*, vi, c. 4.

And now see what it says about the preparation for justification:[1]

"Called by divine grace and helped by it, man receives the faith by hearing (Rom. x. 17), and moves freely towards God, believing in the truth of the revelations and the divine promises, and especially that God justifies the wicked by His grace, by virtue of the Redemption in Christ Jesus (Rom. iii. 24); recognizing himself as a sinner, under the salutary force of the fear of divine justice, he sets himself to consider the mercy of God and allows himself to be raised up by hope, trusting that God will be propitious to him on account of Christ; he begins to love Him as the source of all justice, and as a result begins to stir up in himself hatred and detestation of sin, which is the penance which ought to precede Baptism (Acts ii. 38) . . ."

"If anyone says that Baptism is optional, that it is not necessary for salvation, let him be anathema."

Thus the Church lays it as a serious obligation on parents to see that their newly-born infants are brought without delay to be baptized.

Whatever efforts are made, Baptism is not immediately available to all. This indubitable fact leads us on to examine the question of those things which in God's Providence can supply for Baptism.

II. *The Substitutes for Baptism*

The desire of the sacrament can, in case of the impossibility of actual reception, supply for this sacrament, necessary as it is for salvation. In such

[1] *Session*, vi, c. 6; *Sess.*, vii; *De Baptismo*, can. 5.

a case God takes the wish for the deed. The writings of the Church which deal with the necessity of Baptism, take into account this equivalent reception, allowed by the Mercy of God. And so we have the declaration of the Council of Trent that the justification of the guilty cannot be brought about without the laver of regeneration or the desire for it.[1]

We can supply for the lack of Baptism in two ways: by martyrdom, or by an act of perfect charity.

1. *Martyrdom.*—We can't imagine a greater proof of love than the sacrifice of one's life. In making reference to this testimony, Christ has given us clearly to understand that He will not leave it unrequited; and that the reward will be none other than the Kingdom of Heaven. In the New Testament there are many texts which bear absolutely clear witness to this effect.

"Matt. v. 10-12: Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye when they shall revile you, and persecute you, and speak all that is evil against you, untruly, for my sake: be glad and rejoice, for your reward is very great in heaven. Matt. x. 16-22: Behold I send you as sheep in the midst of wolves. Be ye therefore wise as serpents and simple as doves. But beware of men. For they will deliver you up in councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues. And you shall be brought before governors, and before kings for my sake, for a testimony to them and the gentiles. . . . And you shall be hated by all men for my name's sake: but he that shall persevere to the end, he shall be saved. Matt. x. 32: But

[1] *Session*, vi, c. 4 (already quoted).

everyone therefore that shall confess me before men, I will also confess him before my Father who is in heaven. Matt. x. 39: He that findeth his life, shall lose it: and he that shall lose his life for me, shall find it. Matt. xvi. 25-26; John xii. 25: He that loveth his life shall lose it: and he that hateth his life in this world, keepeth it unto life eternal. Acts xxi. 11-14 (Agabus foretells the martyrdom of St. Paul); Rom. v. 3-5: And not only so; but we glory also in tribulations, knowing that tribulation worketh patience: and patience trial; and trial hope. And hope confoundeth not: because the charity of God is poured forth in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost who is given to us. Rom. viii. 17-18: And if sons, heirs also: heirs indeed of God, and joint-heirs with Christ: yet so if we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified with him. For I reckon that the sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us. Rom. viii. 35-39; 2 Cor. iv. 17: For that which is at present momentary and light of our tribulation, worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory. 2 Cor. xii. 10; Phillip i. 29-30; 2 Tim. iv. 6: For I am even now ready to be sacrificed: and the time of my dissolution is at hand. 1 Peter ii. 21; iv. 13: But if you partake of the suffering of Christ, rejoice that when his glory shall be revealed you may also be glad with exceeding joy. 1 John iii. 16: In this we have known the charity of God, because he hath laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. 1 John v. 6; Apoc. ii. 10 (to the Angel of the Church of Smyrna): Be thou faithful unto death: and I will give thee the crown of life. Apoc. vi. 9-11: And when he had opened

the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held. And they cried with a loud voice, saying: How long, O Lord, (holy and true) dost thou not judge and revenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given to every one of them one: and it was said to them, that they should rest for a little time, till their fellow-servants and their brethren, who are to be slain, even as they, should be filled up. Apoc. vii. 13-15: And one of the ancients answered, and said to me: these that are clothed in white robes, who are they? and whence came they? And I said to him: my lord, thou knowest. And he said to me: these are they who are come out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and have made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore they are before the throne of God, and they serve him day and night in his temple."

Most of these texts deal, as a matter of fact, with the baptized; but they voice a general law: the bond of blood is the strongest of all; those who are reunited to Christ by a death unto blood, live with Him for ever. We find in the literature of the persecutions frequent and glowing expression of this confidence. The transports of joy in the case of St. Ignatius, the Martyr Bishop of Antioch, is well known, how he longed to be ground by the teeth of the beasts, in order to become the wheat of Christ.[1] Polycarp, the Martyr Bishop of Smyrna, was carried away rejoicing as he ascended the stake:[2] in the account of his passion the day of

[1] *Ad. Rom.*, 2-6.
[2] *Martyrium Polycarpi*, xviii, 3.

martyrdom is celebrated as a birthday: *hemeran genethlion.* It is the Church's wont to keep the festival of the *natalicia martyrum.* St. Ireneus does not hesitate to declare as blessed the infants massacred by Herod out of hatred of Christ.[1] Tertullian compares martyrdom with Baptism of water; martyrdom can supply for Baptism, and give it to one who has missed it. So great indeed was the repute in which the martyrs were held that to them was accorded the privilege, denied to other holy souls, of immediate entrance into heaven.[2] Origen ventures to say that Baptism of blood is higher than Baptism of water.[3] For in effect, very few of those who receive Baptism of water are fortunate enough to preserve it unsullied to the end of their life; whilst only after Baptism of blood there is no more sin; it effaces, so to speak, even future sins. After Origen, who dedicated to his friend Ambrose a thrilling exhortation to martyrdom, comes St. Cyprian. He composed a little work for Fortunatus, which is a kind of manual of preparation for martyrdom. He also places Baptism of blood above Baptism of water: it is a Baptism richer in grace, higher in power, more highly honoured, a Baptism which the angels minister, which ravishes God and Christ, which puts an end to sin, a seal to faith, and which reunites us immediately to God on our departure from this world. Baptism of water remits sins; Baptism of blood crowns the virtues. St. Cyprian examines *ex professo* the cases of certain catechumens who were seized by the persecutors and baptized in their own

[1] *Adv. Haereses,* III, xvi, 4; xviii, 4.
[2] *De Anima,* 55; *Scorpiace,* 12; *De Baptismo,* 16.
[3] *Ad Martyrium exhortatio,* 30 *sqq.*

blood.[1] Not only does he deem them blessed, but he attributes to them the *sacramentum baptismi.* In the language of St. Cyprian the word *sacramentum* had not yet acquired the hard and fast meaning that has been given to it in the theological language of to-day.

The Fathers are at one in asserting the sanctifying power of Baptism of blood. St. Augustine states that the liturgy of the Church gives to the martyrs a place apart in the Canon of the Mass: they are not mentioned with the other faithful departed, who have need of prayers. We must not do the martyrs the wrong of praying for them.[2] *Iniuria est pro martyre orare.* We pray to them.

St. Thomas puts the question in theological terms, and asks:[3] Must we speak of three Baptisms? The reply is in the affirmative; but we are not to be deceived in saying that: there are not three sacraments. There is only one Sacrament of Baptism: the Baptism of water instituted by Christ. In regard to Baptism of blood, it manifests the divine power which goes beyond the institution of the sacrament: this Baptism, which represents under a bloody form the Passion of Christ, draws from that Passion a special power. We see that if, in the mind of St. Thomas, Baptism of blood includes all the power of Baptism of desire—and that is very true, for there can't be a martyr without charity—then it includes something more.[4] For

[1] *Ep.*, lxxiii., 22 (edition Hartel).
[2] *Sermo*, clix, 1.
[3] III[a], q. 66, a. ii.
[4] III[a], q. 66, a. 12. . . . The Passion of Christ in the case of baptism of water operates by a kind of figurative representation, but in baptism of desire or penance by a certain affection; but in the case of baptism of blood

this likeness to Christ suffering, which is the special characteristic of martyrdom, has a power and efficacy which is peculiar to it, a power quasi-sacramental, and justifies *ex opere operato*. This is indeed necessary in order to admit the efficacy of martyrdom in the case of infants, and also in the case of martyrs put to death during their sleep.[1]

For the martyr to be justified, no other disposition is needed except sincere attrition, excluding all attachment to mortal sin. We need nothing more for sanctifying grace, on finding the soul open to it, to enter in and bring with it the whole retinue of the infused virtues.

On the other hand no profession of the faith unto blood carries with it the essence of the sacrament instituted by Christ. It can confer sanctifying grace, but not the character. And so the catechumen, justified by such a profession, would not be free from the obligation of receiving Baptism of water, if he happened to survive the ordeal, for in such a Baptism he will receive the baptismal character, carrying with it the right to receive the other sacraments of the Church.

2. *An act of charity*.—This second substitute for Baptism of water is suggested with sufficient clearness by Scripture, where we find this general principle laid down in different ways: whosoever loves God is loved by Him in return. Consequently, if a man is deprived of Baptism, in spite of his

by an imitation of the work. Cf. q. 87, a. 1, ad 2m: Suffering unto death undertaken for Christ has the force of baptism; and so cleanses from all guilt both venial and mental, unless the will is found actually adhering to sin.

[1] See Suarez, *De Sacramentis in genere*, Disp., xxix; Bellarmine, *De Baptismo*, c. vi.

desire to receive it, he can be justified by virtue of his love, and assured of eternal life. We here speak of the love of charity, by which God is loved for His own sake and above all things. Such a love is the fruit of prevenient grace. We will give some of the texts of Scripture:

"1 Kings xvi. 7: God beholdeth the heart. Proverbs viii. 17: I love those who love me."

"Luke x. 25-28: And behold a certain lawyer stood up, tempting him, and saying: Master, what must I do to possess eternal life? But he said to him: What is written in the law? How readest thou? He answering, said: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbour as thyself. And he said to him: Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live. John xiv. 21: He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them: he it is that loveth me. And he that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father: and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. Rom. ii. 28-29: For it is not he is a Jew who is so outwardly: nor is that circumcision which is outwardly in the flesh. But he is a Jew that is one inwardly; and the circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, not in the letter: whose praise is not of men, but of God. 1 John iv. 7: And everyone that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God."

In the many references in the New Testament to Baptism of the Spirit, it is reasonable to see reference to this interior operation of the Spirit, which is not necessarily bound up with baptismal ablution, but which never goes without purification of heart. This operation is clearly seen in the

case of the centurion Cornelius and his household, who were filled with the Spirit before they were baptized. Acts x. 44 *sqq.*

The question is one of very great importance as well, because it deals with the only way of salvation available to a very large part of the human race. The words of St. Peter in the Acts of the Apostles retain all their reality:[1] "Neither is there salvation in any other (than Jesus)." But in order to come to salvation, a twofold preparation is necessary: a preparation of mind and a preparation of heart.

In regard to the preparation of mind, we find it outlined in the Epistle to the Hebrews:[2] "For without faith it is impossible to please God. For he that cometh to God, must believe that he is, and is a rewarder to them that seek him." This preparation is usually brought about by the preaching of the Gospel; and upon this the Fathers chiefly insist.

But the Fathers are not unaware that there is also necessary a preparation of heart; and we can detect in the most ancient among them quite clear references to what is called in theology "Baptism of desire."

As early as the second century such allusions, it would seem, are to be met with in Hermas. At the base of the tower, raised on the waters of Baptism, which signifies the Church, he points to stones not used for the time being, but which do not seem to be irrevocably wasted.[3] We can see here the symbol of those sinners who long for salvation and

[1] Acts iv. 12.
[2] Heb. xi. 6.
[3] *Pastor, Vis.*, iii, 76.

who, if they do not come by the great gate of Baptism, can yet benefit by their good desires.

At the beginning of the third century, Tertullian clearly oversteps the mark: for in his insistence on not giving Baptism hastily, he boldly guarantees that having just faith alone will ensure salvation.[1]

With more prudence and moderation, St. Cyprian[2] points out to certain Christians who are distressed that the wish will stand for the act in the eyes of God, that there is a martyrdom without blood, which can have all the meritorious power of baptism of blood; that God has in the treasury of His graces the means to supply the lack of Baptism; and as an example of the extraordinary grace, he gives the example of the conversion of the thief on the cross.

Clement of Alexandria sets forth, after St. Paul, the power of love:[3] "If anyone nourishes love in his heart, he can, even when he has been born in sin and been overcome by many faults, grow in love, reach complete penitence, and make reparation for his aberrations." Origen also uses the example of the penitent thief.[4]

The author of the Roman Clementine makes the Apostle St. Peter say to the valiant woman:[5] "Take courage! Many others have suffered for a guilty passion, you have suffered for chastity. By that you have merited to live. If you had died, your soul would have been saved. You have left

[1] *De Baptismo*, 18.
[2] *De Mortalitate*, 17; *Ad Fortunatum*, 12; *Epistles* x. 5; xii. 1; lxxiii. 22.
[3] *Quis dives salvetur*, 38.
[4] *In Rom.*, v, 9.
[5] *Clement. Homil.*, xiii, 20.

your native Rome for the sake of chastity. In seeking after this good, you have acquired the reality and the diadem of the eternal kingdom. You have escaped the peril of the sea; had you died to preserve chastity then the ocean itself would have served as Baptism for the salvation of your soul."

The instance of the thief on the cross is again taken, this time by St. Ephrem, St. John Chrysostom and others. St. John Chrysostom, in commenting on St. Paul, lays down the principle that charity is of more avail than martyrdom itself; for charity, without martyrdom, serves to make us disciples of Christ; martyrdom, without charity, does not thus avail.[1]

But the two chief exponents of the doctrine of Baptism of desire, among the Fathers, were St. Ambrose and St. Augustine.

Ambrose had seen the young Emperor Valentinian II carried off by a violent death (375) on the eve of his Baptism. He seeks consolation for himself and his people in the thought that the young Prince has not been cheated of his wishes.[2] *Certe, quia poposcit, accepit.* In Holy Writ he finds a sure guarantee for his conviction (Wisdom iv. 7). He traces a parallel between the martyr-catechumens and this fervent catechumen. *Quod si suo abluuntur sanguine, et hanc sua pietas abluit et voluntas.*

Augustine often treats of Baptism of desire, sometimes recalling the instance of the centurion Cornelius, and at another time the case of the penitent thief. At the same time we notice in the development of his ideas that he goes back some-

[1] *In Genesim*, Homil., vii, 4.
[2] *De obitu Valentiniani*, 51, 53.

what on his former position. In his writings dealing with the Donatist controversy, he sets down without hesitation the principle: to love God, is already to possess Him.[1] Later on in life, he has scruples about it,[2] and asks the question: could the good thief be put in the same category as the martyrs? And also, do we know that he was not baptized, before he committed the crimes he expiated on the cross? It is true that the Pelagian dispute had come along. Faced with this heresy, which made little of Baptism, Augustine is afraid of the consequences of the principle which he had at first admitted without further thought; now, faced with its consequences, he goes back on his former position and changes his mind. All the same, the principle stands as the expression of the judgment he spontaneously expressed.

Among the scholastics, with the exception of Abelard, who, it is fairly clear, is opposed to Baptism of desire, no discordant note is raised. We have St. Bernard exclaiming that never will he recede from those two pillars of the faith, Ambrose and Augustine.[3] Peter Lombard, following in the footsteps of Augustine, gives voice to this fruitful idea, carefully as one must needs apply it: God does not restrict His power to the Sacraments:[4] *Deus suam potentiam sacramentis non alligavit.* St. Thomas takes the same idea from him,[5] and

[1] *De Diversis Quaestionibus*, 83, q. 62; *De Baptismo contra Donatistas*, IV, xxi, 28; xxii, 29; *De Div. Quaestionibus ad Simplicianum*, I, ii, 2.
[2] *De anima et eius origine*, I, ix, 12; *Retract*, I, 26; Cf. In Joan. Tract., xiii, 7.
[3] *Ep. ad Hugonem Victorinum*, lxxvii, 8.
[4] *Sent.*, IV, 4, 5.
[5] III[a], q. 64, a. 7; 68 a. 2; 66 a. 11.

lays down in so many words that, in the case of a necessary sacrament, God takes the wish for the deed. He accepts the teaching in regard to Baptism of desire, as set forth by St. Ambrose.

The documents, which set forth the authoritative teaching of the Church, are perfectly clear on the power of perfect charity to bring about justification.

A question was asked of Innocent II (1130-1143) arising out of a man, who was thought to be a priest, and who has never been baptized, as was discovered after his death. The reply he gave was that we ought not be disturbed concerning the salvation of this priest, who had lived in good faith and practised all the powers of the priesthood. God had made provision for that.[1]

Three times the Council of Trent lays down that the *votum sacramenti* can stand for the sacrament.[2]

St. Pius V condemns various propositions of Baius, which imply that charity can exist in the soul without the remission of sins.[3]

The teaching of the Church, set forth with such emphasis, provides a solid basis for the fact that Baptism of desire can supply the place of actual Baptism.

III. *The Fate of Infants who die without Baptism*

This is a problem at once perplexing and poignant, a problem in which we put our finger on the mystery of gratuitous predestination to

[1] Text in Denzinger-Banmwart, n. 388.
[2] Sess., vi, c. 4; sess., vii, *De Sacramentis*, c. 4; Sess., xiv, c. 4.
[3] *Prop.*, 31, 32, 33, 69, 70, 71.

grace and glory. Our reason is satisfied only by considering on the one hand the tremendous boon it means to a large number to be elected to possess God for ever, and on the other hand the consigning of the others to the fatherly Providence of God, who bears hatred to none of His creatures, and who surely finds the means of procuring for human beings, who have failed to attain their happy destiny through no fault of their own, some just compensation which brings out, even in their case, that it is better for them to exist than not to exist. We will preface our remarks by recalling the teaching of the faith on this matter; then we will give the mind of Catholic theologians on the point.

1. At the outset it is incumbent, no matter what it costs us, to admit that infants, who have not received either Baptism of water or desire, cannot attain to the beatific vision. That is the clear purport of the words of our Lord to Nicodemus, which we have quoted several times already. The mind of the Church, whilst it has not expressed itself in an *ex cathedra* definition, yet is unwavering and finds utterance in the ordinary teaching of the Church in a way that excludes all prudent doubt. The slight fluctuations we observe now and then cannot effect so strong a tradition. As an indication of the mind of the ancient Church read the account St. Augustine gives of a child, who dies in its mother's arms, and is then called back to life through the intercession of St. Stephen the Martyr, and baptized. The child then dies a second time, and is borne to the grave by its mother in triumph. She had wept not so much for its body as its soul, and now exchanged tears for thanksgiving when she saw it assured of eternal life. On

this matter St. Thomas sums up the opinion of the Christian centuries,[1] and says that it was the wish of God, owing to the necessity of Baptism, to make it accessible to all both by choosing as the matter an element so easy to procure, and by giving to all the power to baptize in case of necessity. St. Thomas is not unmindful that "God does not confine His power to the sacraments," and leaves open the possibility of miracle.[2] But he is careful to lay down that miracle is outside the ordinary course of Providence; it is not to be presumed, but must be proved, as the miraculous sanctification of St. John Baptist is proved from Scripture. Quite a number of theologians have tried to find a way for the ordinary Providence of God to bring about the salvation of these infants. We have, for instance, in the fourteenth century Durandus; Gerson and Biel in the fifteenth century; and Cajetan in the sixteenth century. Cajetan thought he had found the solution in the prayer of the Christian mother for the fruit of her womb. These efforts have never been encouraged by the Church. The Council of Trent, out of regard for the great name of Cajetan, desisted from anathematizing his opinion; but, by the command of the Sovereign Pontiff St. Pius V, the passage in which he outlined this theory was erased from his works. Many similar attempts have been made in the centuries that have since elapsed. In the seventeenth century there is Cardinal Sfondrati, who, in his work entitled *Nodus Praedestinationis Dissolutus*, put forward the case of infants dying without Baptism as specially to be envied. Bossuet

[1] III[a], q. 67, a. 3.
[2] III[a], q. 68 a. ad 1[m].

and four French Bishops delated it to be Congregation of the Index. It was not condemned owing to the special intervention of Pope Innocent XII, but it was not thereby approved. These efforts were in one way or another renewed by Amort and Bianchi in the eighteenth century, and by Klee, Caron, Vosen and Schell, in the nineteenth century. Such men as these among them were condemned by the Church; and she has never approved of efforts of this kind.

2. On the other hand it is likely that these babes suffer no pain of sense. Before the Pelagian controversy the problem was scarcely heard of. This dispute led St. Augustine to extremes, but the Church has never followed him in that attitude. When he was engaged with the Manicheans he was bold enough to say:[1] "Who can say whether, in the mysterious judgments of God, He does not allot some beneficent compensation to these little ones, who have neither merited nor demerited?" At that time he did not see anything incongruous in admitting a middle state between a state of reward and that of punishment. Towards the end of his life, in his contest with Pelagius, he thought it was necessary to lay down that these infants suffered some penalty, all be it that it was the mildest of all. And he declared quite clearly that there was no middle way between heaven in the company of Christ and hell with the devil.[2]

A stream of tradition can be traced from St.

[1] *De libero arbitrio,* III, xxiii, 66-68.

[2] *De peccatorum meritis et remissione,* I, xvi, 21; xxviii, 55; III, iv, 7; *Ep.*, cxc, 3, 12; *De anima et ejus origine,* I, 9, 11, 12; *Enchiridion,* 93; *Contra Julianum,* V, xi, 44; *Op. imperf. contra Julianum,* II, 117.

Augustine on this point. In more or less agreement we find St. Avitus of Vienne, St. Fulgentius of Ruspe, even St. Gregory the Great, and St. Isidore of Seville; among the scholastics we have St. Anselm, Ognibenus, Roland Bandinelli, Gregory of Rimini, and Driedo; whilst among the moderns Petau and Bossuet are to be found. Jansenism supported wholeheartedly this school of thought.

But a more merciful teaching was always in the ascendant among the Fathers and the scholastics, and has received increasing support in recent times. We can name among the Greeks, St. Gregory of Nazianzen, St. Gregory of Nyssa, the Pseudo-Justin, Pseudo-Athanasius, Cosmas Indicopleustes; Tertullian can be quoted among the Latins; and among the scholastics we can appeal to Abelard, Peter Lombard, Alexander of Hales, Albert the Great, St. Bonaventure, and St. Thomas.

This second school of opinion gains much additional strength from the action of Pius VI, who condemned (28th of August 1794) the twenty-sixth proposition of the Jansenist Synod of Pistoia. This proposition spoke of the idea of a "limbo" as distinct from hell, where infants dying without Baptism were deprived of the beatific vision, but suffered no pain of fire, as a "Pelagian fable." From the point of view of history, the confusion was very uncalled for in even taking as certainly genuine the third Canon of the Council of Milevis (416). In that Canon we have the condemnation of the Pelagian idea of a so-called limbo pointed out by our Lord in St. John (xiv. 2), and situated adjoining the Kingdom of Heaven. In clearing away this confusion, Pius VI adds great weight to the more merciful opinion which speaks of a limbo,

completely apart from the Kingdom of Heaven, but an abode in which there is no positive pain.

3. Solid reasons can be brought forward to support the idea that these infants, in addition to suffering no pain of sense, enjoy real natural happiness. On this point St. Thomas is entitled to be called the theologian of mercy; and his contention is very powerfully sustained. These children have contracted at birth the sin common to their nature, and to that sin there is attached the penalty of loss; they have therefore failed to attain to their supernatural end. But they have not aggravated their lot by any actual sin, and therefore they have not incurred the penalty of the pain of sense, since this penalty is inflicted for the abuse of created things. There does not therefore seem to be anything against God giving them a natural happiness, more or less like that which would have been the reward of human nature, had not God been pleased to raise it to a higher state by His gratuitous favours. Nothing seems more in keeping than this with the all-embracing kindness of the Creator. As regards the happiness they have lost, they have no knowledge of it, and therefore do not experience its loss.[1]

Such is the position, in main outline, to which the bulk of Catholic theologians incline more and more.

[1] *De Malo*, q. v, a. 2: Original sin does not incur pain of sense, but only pain of loss, that is, the loss of the divine vision. *Ib.*, a. 3: Let it be said that the souls of children do not lack natural knowledge, such as is due to a separated soul according to its nature, but they lack supernatural knowledge which is planted in us by faith. . . . What they have by nature, they possess without suffering.

IV. *The Salvation of Infidels*

By infidels we mean here those adults to whom the Gospel has not been preached, and are thus ignorant, through no fault of their own, of the means of salvation entrusted to the Church by God. Their invincible ignorance cannot merit blame. They are sometimes called "negative" infidels, in order to distinguish them from positive infidels who have heard the appeal of the Christian revelation, and have rejected it to their own undoing. For all that these men have a share in the Redemption of Christ. How can they benefit by it? The Christians of the first centuries had to take this question into account: the problem faces us to-day more insistently than ever, for the number of infidels was always enormous and remains so, in fact they have been, and are, the greater part of the human race.[1]

The replies that have been given in the course of history to this question can be reduced to three:

1. The preaching of the Gospel beyond the grave.
2. The consigning to the limbo of the infants.
3. The appeal to Baptism of desire.

1. *The preaching of the Gospel beyond the grave.*—This is a strange fancy of which we meet indications, more or less clear, especially in the second and third centuries, in Hermas, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and in various apochryphal writings. This theory rests on the supposition that the just of the Old Law were waiting in limbo for

[1] See in the *Dictionnaire Apologétique de la Foi Catholique* the article Religions (*Statistique des*).

the coming of Christ, and have been obliged to receive Christian Baptism before entering heaven with Him. They were prepared, either by Christ Himself, or by His disciples. In support of this contention appeal has been made to a number of texts of Sacred Scripture: for instance, Matt. xii. 32, in which it was thought there was a reference to a remission of sins in the world to come; and also 1 Peter iii. 18-20, in which a mention of a preaching of the Gospel preliminary to this Baptism in the other world was thought to be found. We will give a quotation from Hermas:[1]

"So long as man bears not the name of the Son of God, he is dead; but on receiving the seal, he puts off mortality in order to receive life. Now the seal is none other than the water (of Baptism). We descend into the water dead, and emerge living. These men will also hear the preaching of the seal, and will have recourse to it, in order to enter the Kingdom of God. The apostles and doctors, who have preached the name of the Son of God, after having died in the power and faith of the Son of God, will preach also to those who have preceded them to the grave, and will give them the seal of their preaching. Then they will descend with them into the water, and will rise out of it again. They have descended living and will issue living; but those who had died before them will go into the water dead and come out living. Therefore, as by the ministry of these apostles and doctors they were infused with life and knew the name of the Son of God, so they will rise with them; and, as they have been incorporated into the very building of the tower, they will enter there as stones which have

[1] *Pastor, Sun.*, ix, 16.

not needed any dressing, for they have lived in justice and great holiness: only the seal was lacking to them."

We come across again the trace, more or less fugitive it is true, of this fanciful idea in some of the Greek Fathers, such as St. Gregory of Nazianzen, Maximus the Confessor, Anastasius the Sinaite, and also in the Latin Fathers like Ambrosiaster and John the Deacon, the biographer of Gregory the Great; and we note a development of the legend. Anastasius the Sinaite tells[1] how, when Christ descended into the limbo of the Fathers, it was Plato who was the first to believe in His word. John the Deacon[2] narrates how the Emperor Trajan was, through the intercession of Pope St. Gregory, not indeed taken from hell, but at least relieved of the pain of the fire. Other developments of a legendary character are to be found, in the nineteenth century, in certain Protestant circles.

But the texts of Scripture, which they quote, do not involve what they try to deduce from them, and the general sentiment of the Fathers is one of constant protest against such a piece of imagination. Such is the attitude, for instance, of St. Cyril of Jerusalem, St. John Chrysostom, St. Philaster, St. Augustine, St. Gregory the Great, and the commentators on the first Epistle of St. Peter, such as St. Cyril of Alexandria, Job the Monk, and St. John Damascene. The idea of the preaching of the Gospel in the world to come has long since disappeared from Catholic teaching.

[1] *Quaestiones et Responsiones* 154, q. III.

[2] *Vita S. Gregorii Magni*, c. 44. See Gaston Paris, *La Legende de Trajan; Bibliothèque de l'Ecole des Hautes-Etudes*, fasc. 35, 1878.

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In the *schema de præcipuis mysteriis fidei*, prepared for the Council of the Vatican, the idea of justification in the world to come is set down as an error to condemn. The first reply given is to remove it.

2. *Consigning to the limbo of the infants.*—This second reply does not so much solve the question, but rather sets it aside. For if it is granted—amongst Catholics—that the state of infants in limbo is not a state of salvation but of damnation—probably, it is true, without suffering—then the consigning of these souls to limbo is only a means of placing a great part of the human race in the well-known alternative place between heaven and hell.

There is besides no doubt that the number of souls in limbo is very great, since the infants who die at an early age are innumerable among all peoples. But the theory we have to consider would involve widening the limbo of the infants to an enormous extent in order to bring in not only the infants, who make up the normal population, but a more or less large number of adults, who can be likened to children in so far as their intellectual and moral stage of development is only rudimentary. It is a matter of common knowledge that it is chiefly the Apologists of Divine Providence who have brought forward this idea and have worked it out, since the sixteenth century, in very different ways, which we cannot follow out in detail. Many of them, in order to gain favour for an idea so alien to those commonly held, turn to account, as a secondary consideration, the idea of the entire gratuitousness of the supernatural order, from which a man can be partly removed in such a way as to be deprived of his eternal heritage without being damned. Others stress the idea of the natural

virtues practised by certain souls which, although devoid of merit to gain heaven, yet are not without merit before God.

Among the exponents of this apologetic thesis we can name the Abbot Trithemus (John of Heidelberg) and Claude Seyssel, Archbishop of Turin in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries; in the seventeenth century, Cardinal Sfondrati; in the eighteenth, Bergier, de Feller, de Maleville, de Partz de Pressy; and in the nineteenth century, the Cardinal of Lucerne, Duvoisin, Emery, Muzzarelli, Frayssinous. . . .

This oft-repeated effort is dictated by the best of intentions. But does it take sufficient cognizance of all the teachings of the faith? There is room for doubt. We know that the whole of mankind is positively called by God to a supernatural end. We know also that human nature is prone to evil. The Canons of the Council of Orange (529) bring to our notice the weakness and misery of human nature even amongst the faithful. How could this weakness be less marked amongst the infidels. An adult can be justified by grace and by faith in the Redeemer. And the response he makes to grace fixes his eternal destiny. To discuss what could happen in the case of a man without grace, is to go decidedly outside the realms of reality.

His Eminence Cardinal Billot in more recent times has given to this thesis a much more theological setting.[1] He examines the idea of moral responsibility, and sets forth arguments which

[1] Nine articles in *Les Etudes* (Oct. 20 1919 to August 20 1923) under the title: *La Providence de Dieu et le nombre infini d'hommes hors de la voie normal du salut.*

make us doubt whether sufficient responsibility to offend God grievously and seal the eternal lot of the soul is to be found among the vast majority of pagans, not only in the case of the lower races, but also among those who were highly civilized, like the men of Babylon, Athens or Rome.[1]

We can now see the bearing of a problem of this kind. On the other hand we see the amount of uncertainty there is about it, seeing there are such weighty reasons to make us hesitate before treating such a multitude of human beings, who are normally developed, as inferior types of mankind, or rather, we should say, as animals. The babe, in the early stages of its development, can be likened to an animal from the point of view of its mental growth; and it is this similarity which they want to extend to a great number of adults. If we restrict our survey to certain primitive races, this likeness may be plausible enough; but the difficulty grows the more we ascend in the scale of civilization. The difficulty is real from the point of view purely of anthropology, but it is not less serious when we view it from the aspect of Christian revelation, for it is not merely the *élite* of pagan antiquity, but in fact the mass of men, whom the Holy Spirit deems responsible for serious moral disorders. We ought to read again the thirteenth chapter of the Book of Wisdom: "But all men are vain, in whom there is not the knowledge of God: and who by these good things that are seen could not understand him that is. Neither by attending to the works, have acknowledged who was the workman . . . they are not to be pardoned. For if they were able to know so much as to make a judgment of

[1] See *Etudes*, t. clxv, p. 515-535 (December 5-20 1920).

the world, how did they not more easily find out the Lord thereof?" And again in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans we read: "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and injustice of those men that detain the truth of God in injustice: because that which is known of God is manifest in them. For God hath manifested it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made. His eternal power also and divinity: so that they are inexcusable."

We can admit without difficulty that there do exist men, who in years are of adult age, and yet are children as far as intelligence and moral responsibility are concerned. But it is the extent which causes us the difficulty. We pause before extending the limb of the infants to such an extent as to be capable of taking in the bulk of the adults of the human race. Or we might rather say that we come up against a veritable impossibility. For, in spite of original sin, humanity remains as such. How can we admit such a falling away in bulk?

3. *Recourse to Baptism of desire.*—This is the solution, in fact, given by Catholic tradition, taken as a whole.

We rely, to begin with, on the fact of the Divine Will to save all men. We can appeal to evidences of this in many passages of the Old[1] and New[2] Testaments. We must understand it of a wish that is antecedent and conditional, without taking into consideration the wish that is consequent and

[1] Is. lv. 1; Oc. xiii. 9, etc.
[2] Matt. xi. 27; xxviii. 19; John vii. 1; viii. 12; Acts x. 34-35; Rom. v. 18; 1 Cor. xv. 22; 1 Tim. ii. 3-7, etc.

absolute, for in this lies the mystery of predestination.

Face to face with the Pelagian heresy, St. Augustine taught the doctrine of predestination with a certain amount of excessive rigour. The anonymous author of the work, *De vocatione gentium*, writing a little later, stressed more the fact of the will of God to save all men; whilst it was St. John Damascene who made clear that in the play of the twofold will of God, the one antecedent and conditional, and the other consequent and conditional, was to be found the only possible way to harmonize the goodness of God in regard to all men and the effective choice of the elect.

The Fathers of the Church have set out in different ways the fact that salvation is really offered to all. St. Justin speaks of Socrates and the best amongst the pagans as instructed effectively by the Verbum. The documents embodying the teaching of the Church hand down this doctrine with clearness and detail. The Council of Orange rejects with horror the idea of men predestined to damnation; and anathematizes anyone who says such a thing. When Jansenius said that it was Semipelagianism to say that the Redemption of Christ was for all men, the Church condemned this proposition of Jansenius as heresy. The axiom of the Schools: *Facienti quod in se est, Deus non denegat gratiam*, has in the course of history been given two extreme interpretations. One interpretation, which was tinged with the heresy of Semipelagianism, said that God does not refuse grace to the effort of human nature: as if grace was due to merely human effort. A second interpretation, which is completely in accord with St. Augustine, laid down that God

responds to the good use made of grace by a further grant of grace. Between these two extreme interpretations there is room for a mean which emphasizes more the universal influences of grace: God forestalls with grace the will of anyone who does not shun Him. Before the rise of the Pelagian peril, this interpretation was general amongst the Fathers; and even after the condemnation of Pelagius, it had a wide vogue in the whole of Christian tradition, and St. Thomas puts it forward as the complete presentation of the divine economy.[1] He says: "God, on His part, is ready to give grace to all . . . 1 Tim. ii. 4. Those only are deprived of grace who place obstacles to it in themselves; in the same way that, when the sun pours its light on the earth, he who shuts his eyes ought to blame himself if any evil befalls him, although he can see nothing without the light of the sun."

The amount of grace differs in different cases, but all share in its visitations.

Now we rely to a great extent on the efficacy of Baptism of desire to realize in actual fact this Divine will to save all men.

Baptism of desire presupposes faith in God as the Rewarder. It is theological faith in the strict sense of the word, a faith by which we adhere to the word of God as to the teaching of a master. Before the coming of Christ we find this faith in the case of Abraham, and in the case of Job the Idumean; and in that faith many of the Jews and Gentiles shared. It was a favourite saying of St. Augustine that the times have changed, but not the faith. A decree of the Holy Office, during the time of Innocent XI, condemned the following

[1] III *Contra Gentes*, 160.

proposition:[1] "Faith in the broad sense of the word, which proceeds from the testimony of creatures, or some like motive, is sufficient for justification." Faith in the wide acceptation, which involves a realization of the absolute attributes of God, but not an adhesion of the mind to the truth taught by Him, is not the faith which is necessary for salvation.

What truths have to be believed as an indispensable condition of salvation, and how can they be known without the teaching of an apostle? There lies the difficulty from the point of view of the traditional teaching. The theologians of the Middle Ages gave a different reply from that given to-day on these abstruse points; but their replies arose from an error of fact, which has been cleared up to-day. A more precise knowledge of the facts has led to the necessary corrections, and has enabled us to restate in different terms a doctrine which in substance has not changed.

St. Thomas said that it was necessary to believe what was essential to arrive at eternal beatitude.[2] But we cannot attain to eternal bliss except by the mysteries of the Incarnation and Passion of Christ. Faith, therefore, in the Incarnation was always requisite for salvation, although in different ways, according to the times and the individuals. He goes on to say that, under the New Law, a knowledge of the chief Christian mysteries is incumbent on all. This reply of St. Thomas was dictated by the circumstances of his day. Had he been living three centuries later, he would have realized the necessity of some modification.

[1] Decree of the Holy Office, 2nd March 1679, n. 23.
[2] IIa, IIae, q. 2, a. 7.

The theologians of the sixteenth century, who saw the need of this adaptation, set themselves to bring it about. On the morrow of the seventh session of the Council of Trent, two eminent theologians of this assembly, by name Dominic Soto, O.P., and Andrew Vega, O.M., published almost at the same time writings in which the problem of the justification of the infidel was examined in the light of the recent ethnographical discoveries. Neither the *De Natura et Gratia* of Soto, nor the *Di Justificatione* of Vega were definitive works; but they put forward for consideration the idea of justification by a faith in the Christian mysteries which is purely implicit.[1] It was a fresh application of the teaching of the Epistle to the Hebrews on the necessity of faith in the supernatural Providence of God as our Rewarder.

Before the end of the century we find Fr. Francis Suarez, S.J., putting forward the plea that, whilst explicit faith in the Redeemer is theoretically always necessary for salvation, yet in fact it can be operative from the time that God inspires us with the desire of it.[2] This distinction which was made between explicit faith which is necessary in fact, and the same faith which is necessary either in fact or desire, proved to be a fertile idea. It made possible the reconciliation of the statements made in the traditional teaching with the condition of things as manifested by recent discoveries.

Ever since the end of the sixteenth century the teaching that men can be saved by a faith in the

[1] These two works appeared in Venice, the first in 1547, the second in 1548.

[2] *De fide, Disp.* xii. s. 4, n. 18.

Redeemer that is merely implicit has obtained great vogue in the schools.

The Church nevertheless requires her catechists to teach the necessary truth of Christianity, namely the Incarnation and the Trinity, even in case of the dying.[1] For it is incumbent on the Church not to leave anything undone to make certain of the faith that is necessary for salvation. After she has done all that she can, she leaves to God to decide in those particular cases which are wrapt in mystery. The Church does not doubt that a man who is deprived of all exterior assistance can acquire a salutary faith by obedience to the voice of his conscience, for she believes that grace operates in the souls of even infidels. St. Thomas considers the case, and gives the solution with wonderful fearlessness:

"If such truths have to be believed explicitly, it matters not that a man has grown up in the depths of the forest and among the wild beasts: for it is part of the Providence of God to provide every man with the necessary means of salvation, so long as he, on his part, puts no obstacle in the way of their operation. If a man, who has been brought up in such circumstances, follows the dictates of his human reason in the pursuit of virtue and the avoidance of evil, then it cannot be doubted that God, on His part, will either reveal to him by interior inspiration the truths necessary to be believed, or will send him someone to preach the faith to him, as He sent Peter to Cornelius." [2]

The ways of God in dealing with souls are many

[1] Replies of the Congregation of the Holy Office, January 26th and May 10th 1703; August 3rd 1860; March 30th 1898.

[2] *De Veritate*, q. xiv, a. 11, ad 1m.

and mysterious; St. Thomas is content to leave it, with entire confidence in God's love to His creatures, without seeking from Him the manner of His operation. In addition we know all that the Angelic Doctor attributes to the divine solicitude in the case of a non-baptized child who wakens up to its rational and moral responsibility. He sets down unhesitatingly and on many occasions that such a child will be called upon to shape its destiny: if it turns to God, it will be justified; if it turns its back on God, it will at the first onset sin grievously; but never shall we find venial sin in its heart with original sin only.[1] This teaching, which is without doubt Thomistic, nevertheless surprises, and in fact divides, the best commentators on St. Thomas. We can deduce from it only one conclusion: namely that St. Thomas, who relies on interior grace for such high hopes in regard to the eventual justification of the child, is the last person calculated to be excessive in his demands when dealing with faith necessary for justification.

The teaching in regard to salvation by faith, that is only implicit, in the supernatural Providence is not strange to the mind of St. Thomas. It is quite true that he applies it directly only to the Gentiles saved before the Incarnation of the Word.[2] But this limitation, which is merely material, and which is due to his restricted knowledge of the facts, does

[1] See Ia, IIae, q. 89, a. 6, and parallel passages.

[2] IIa, IIae, q. 2, a. 7, ad 3m: . . . If yet any were saved to whom revelation was not made, they were not saved without faith in a mediator; because, although they had not explicit faith, yet they had implicit faith in Divine Providence, believing that God is a Liberator of men according to the ways He chose, and according as the Spirit had revealed to some who knew the truth.

not militate against the universal application of the principle he lays down. This principle leaves a wide field open for Baptism of Desire in all ranks of mankind.[1]

[1] On this vast and difficult question, valuable light will be found in the two volumes of M. l'abbé Capéron on *Le problème du salut des infidèles; Essai historique et Essai theologique.* Paris, 1912. See also in the *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique,* the article *Salut des Infidèles* by R. P. Harent, S.J. (1923). We have dealt with the question briefly in the *Dictionnaire Apologétique de la Foi catholique,* article *Salut des Infidèles* (1926).

CHAPTER VII

THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION

I. *Baptism and Confirmation*

In the mind of the early Church as well as in that of Christ the Sacrament of Baptism, given in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, implied that the whole Divine Trinity took possession of the soul of the Christian. Nevertheless the personal action of the Holy Spirit was not given the special prominence it enjoyed either in the descent of the Holy Ghost in the form of a dove on the banks of the Jordan, or again as was implied in the words of the Precursor regarding the Baptism of Fire, or in that charter of salvation contained in the words of Christ to Nicodemus. And thus Baptism of water did not bring about that full initiation promised by Christ to His followers. The repeated promise of the Holy Spirit, who was to come to them and complete their supernatural development,[1] implied implicitly an institution which would complete that of Baptism.

The outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost brought the first-fruits of the Spirit to the

[1] John xiv. 16, 17, 26; xv. 26; xvi. 7, 8, 13; Luke xxiv. 49; Acts i. 4, 8.

Apostles.[1] But it was not the Apostles only who were to be the recipients. From the earliest days of the preaching of the Apostles there are evidences of a permanent institution which Christ intended should exist side by side with Baptism.

Take the incident in Samaria.[2] There the Deacon Philip has preached the Gospel with success, and has administered Baptism. The news reaches Jerusalem, and the college of the Apostles sends Peter and John to complete the work begun by Philip. Peter and John impose hands on the newly-baptized; the Holy Ghost thereupon descends on them, and manifests His presence by an increased working of marvels which had previously been witnessed after Philip had baptized. Seeing these wonders Simon of Samaria, whom Philip had drawn and baptized, is envious of the Apostles' powers and offers to purchase them.

The purport of this incident is abundantly clear. Powerful as was Philip in word and deed, he did not possess all the apostolic faculties. The intervention of the more richly endowed of those whom the Lord had sent was necessary if the earth, sanctified as it was by the sojourn of our Lord, was to have the perfect adorers in Spirit and in Truth whom He had claimed for His Father. After Baptism has been conferred by the evangelist, the giving of the Holy Ghost is put before us as a special prerogative of the Apostles bound up with an external act. It is, in fine, the second sacrament.

More than twenty years pass by. We are now at Ephesus, where the Christian message has been

[1] Acts ii.
[2] Acts viii. 4-17.

announced in outline by Apollo.[1] The Apostle St. Paul is passing by, and he finds a number of fervent disciples, of whom he inquires whether they have received the Holy Ghost. They tell him with surprise that they have not even heard the name of the Holy Spirit. Paul, who thought he was dealing with baptized Christians, finds that they are only catechumens, baptized with the baptism of John. He has them baptized with the Baptism of Christ, imposes hands on them in order to give them the Holy Spirit, who manifests Himself as heretofore at Samaria by the gifts of tongues and prophecy.

The question asked by St. Paul and his subsequent procedure make it clear that he was following a line of action which had been perfectly agreed upon. He thought that he could confine himself to completing the work of others by the exercise of the special apostolic gift. He finds that the distinctively Christian initiation has not been begun; and so he supplies this defect, and then acts himself as the dispenser of the Holy Spirit. Here again we notice the distinction made between the two sacraments, and the fact that the second is reserved to the Apostles.

The parallel that exists between the two incidents is clear. In reading the clear narrative given by St. Luke we cannot reasonably doubt that both Peter and John in Samaria, and Paul at Ephesus are following out a line of procedure already laid down. In order to get at the origin of this procedure we are taken back to the preaching of the Apostles, nay further, to Christ, who made His intention clear by the promise of the Holy Spirit as we find laid

[1] Acts xix. 1-6.

down in the clearest terms in St. John and in St. Luke. All that is perfectly consecutive.

We can go still further back. Let us, however, confine ourselves for the time being to reading over again in the New Testament the allusions that are the clearest in reference to the Sacrament of the Holy Spirit.

The Epistle to the Hebrews has in mind certain converts from Judaism who give signs of hankering after the Mosaic observances. The Apostle writes to them:[1] "Wherefore leaving the word of the beginning of Christ, let us go on to things more perfect, not laying again the foundation of penance from dead works, and of faith towards God, of the doctrine of baptisms, and imposition of hands, and of the resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment." We meet here again the act of laying-on of hands brought into conjunction with Baptism: to all appearances there is reference to the same line of action which we have seen followed in Samaria, and then at Ephesus, in order to confer the Holy Spirit. Moreover there is mention of the Holy Spirit in a passage that follows:[2] "For it is impossible for those who were once illuminated, have tasted the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost . . . to be renewed again to penance." The different stages of the Christian initiation appear here again, in the order we are familiar with; we can identify the Sacrament of the Holy Ghost.

In our day we are told that the rite of the imposition of hands to confer the Holy Ghost is an invention of the Gentile Churches in order to bring

[1] Hebrews vi. 1-2.
[2] Hebrews vi. 4, 6.

the Judaic-Christian communities under their jurisdiction. This new line of interpretation surely betrays inventiveness of no mean order. But this policy which is attributed to the Gentile Churches finds no justification in the account given by St. Luke, who ought to be cognizant of such a course, seeing that he was the companion of the Apostle of the Gentiles in his journeys. It is perfectly certain that St. Paul did not inaugurate a new rite in order to gather a handful of catechumens at Ephesus. And it is not in the name of the Gentiles that Peter and John went from Jerusalem to Samaria to confirm the converts of Philip the Deacon.[1]

Without continuing our researches further, we will merely note that the gift of the Holy Spirit is the fulfilment of a Messianic promise found in many a passage of Isaias, Ezechiel, Zacharias, Joel and other prophets.[2] From the day of Pentecost, St. Peter points out to his hearers at Jerusalem how the words of Joel were fulfilled in the Apostles; and the theme recurs in his words before the Sanhedrin.[3]

This Messianic promise comes up again in the Gospel as finding fulfilment. St. Luke especially gives us many allusions to the Holy Spirit.[4] We find such in the narrative of the Incarnation, in the

[1] The beautiful book of M. Jos. Coppens can be read on this point. It is entitled: *L'imposition des mains et les rites connexes dans le Nouveau Testament et dans l'Eglise ancienne*, pp. 212-243. Louvain, Paris, 1925.

[2] Is. xliv. 3; lv. 1; lviii. 11; Ez. xlvii. 1, 2; Zach. xiii. 1; xiv. 8; Joel. ii. 28.

[3] Acts ii. 16; v. 32.

[4] Luke i. 15-17, 35, 41, 42, 67, 80; iii. 16, 22; iv. 1, 18; xii. 11, 12; xxiv. 49.

whole career of John the Baptist, in the beginnings of the public life of our Lord, as well as in his last discourses. St. John puts on the lips of our Lord the sayings of the Bible relating to the working of the Spirit:[1] even before giving the account of the Last Supper, he warns us of the coming of the Spirit, by telling us that it is to be deferred until after our Lord has been glorified.[2] The Sacrament, then, which completes Baptism, comes before us after we have been prepared a long time by Sacred Scripture.[3]

The Fathers of the third century, in addition to giving the episodes of Samaria and Ephesus, make a clear distinction between the two sacraments of the initiation of a Christian in the liturgy of their time: there is Baptism of water and the Sacrament of the Holy Ghost, and this latter is given exclusively by bishops, and administered at first, in line with apostolic tradition, by the imposition of hands. We shall see that before long the rite undergoes variations; but, apart from the differences of ritual, the substance remains the same.

There is no need to take into account the decrees attributed to Pope Fabian (236-250) and Pope Melchiades (311-314), and to be found in the pseudo-Isidorian collection, unless it is as testifying to the current of ancient thought. There are sufficient evidences from other sources to establish the belief of the third and fourth centuries in regard to the

[1] John iii. 5, 8, 34; iv. 10, 14, 23, 24.
[2] John vii. 37-39.
[3] John x. 10; xiv. 16, 17, 26; xv. 26; xvi. 7, 8, 13. On this subject consult the article in the *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique* entitled *Confirmation dans la Sainte Ecriture* by Mgr. Ruch (1907); and the work of R. P. J.-B. Umberg, Die Schriftlehre der Firmung (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1920).

Sacrament of the Holy Spirit, as well as to establish the way in which it was administered. The teaching which St. Thomas develops in the thirteenth century has sufficient foundation in history without using these apocryphal texts.

The Church has found sufficient evidence in her primitive tradition to effectively rebut the attacks made on the sacrament by the Albigensians, the Vaudois, and the Reformers of the sixteenth century. They wanted to see in Confirmation only a public profession of the faith already sealed on their souls at Baptism. Voicing the same tradition, Pius X condemned the following proposition of the Modernists:[1] "There is nothing to prove that the rite of the Sacrament of Confirmation was in use at the time of the Apostles; and the formal distinction between the two Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation is not to be found in the history of primitive Christianity."

II. *The Rite of Confirmation*

Although we can trace the rite of Confirmation as distinct from Baptism from the beginning, yet we do not find it materially the same from the time of the Apostles. This evolution, which has taken place in the course of its history, concerns the sacrament itself, and calls for a careful examination; such an inquiry will be fruitful in the conclusion we come to in so far as they touch on the governing principles of the theology of the sacraments.

We have seen the chain of proof provided by the links we find in Scripture in regard to the Sacrament

[1] Decree *Lamentabili*, prop. 44 (July 3rd 1907).

of the Spirit: the facts which come to light in the history of the Apostles cannot be reasonably accounted for except by the fact that the Sacrament was instituted by Christ. But the fact of the institution of this Sacrament is different from that of Baptism, for we cannot prove it by any direct testimony.

In regard to Baptism, the Gospel not only outlines the genesis of the Sacrament, but it records the express will of Christ in its regard as well as the choice of the rite to be used. Whilst in regard to Confirmation it gives us neither one nor the other. The Church teaches that it was the will of Christ to link the gift of the Holy Spirit to a sensible rite; in order to ascertain what this rite is we have to consult the practice of the Church, and we find that the practice has varied. We find an addition made to the Apostolic rite of the imposition of hands in the shape of an anointing which appears at first in the East and afterwards in the West. From the fourth century the anointing gradually becomes the predominant feature. The change does not take place everywhere at the same time, and when we try to arrive at certainty about it, we find ourselves faced with difficult problems. We find in the baptismal rite quite early an anointing; and we cannot always make certain whether the unction belongs to Baptism or Confirmation.

Such then are the facts.

The two rites of imposition of hands and anointing are found side by side from very early times.

In the Old Testament we find the imposition of hands used as an act of blessing: Jacob blesses Joseph's sons by crossing his hands on their heads.[1]

[1] Gen. xlviii. 14.

It is used as a ceremony of investiture: in the consecration of the Levites, in the investiture conferred by Moses on Joshua.[1] It is used as a sacrificial act, as when the priests impose hands on the head of the victims.[2] It is used in passing judgments, when the sentence is pronounced.[3] Then in the New Testament we find it used by our Lord in giving a blessing.[4] Moreover we find the imposition of hands used by our Lord and His disciples in the cures they wrought.[5] We find it employed again after the election of the seven first deacons, as well as in the ordination of Saul and Barnabas, and in the case of the pastors placed in charge of the Churches.[6]

In the Old Testament we find mention of the ceremony of anointing, a rite which was common amongst the Eastern peoples. We find it used after taking a bath;[7] it is used to pay honour to a host;[8] and it is a sign of joy, or good fortune.[9] We meet with it again in the solemn investiture of prophets, kings, and priests.[10] In the pages of the New Testament it is again used as a mark of hospitality;[11] also it is found as a means of restoring health

[1] Num. viii. 10 *sqq.*; xxvii. 18 *sqq.*
[2] Ex. xxix. 10, 15, 19; Lev. i. 4; iii. 2, 8, 13; iv. 4, 24, 29, 33; viii. 14, 18; xvi. 21; 2 Par. xxix. 23.
[3] Lev. xxiv. 14; Dan. xiii. 34.
[4] Matt. xix. 15; Mark x. 16.
[5] Matt. ix. 18; Mark v. 23; vi. 5; vii. 32; viii. 23, 25; Luke iv. 40; xiii. 13; Acts ix. 12, 17; xxviii. 8.
[6] Acts vi. 6; xiii. 3; 1 Tim. iv. 14; v. 22; 2 Tim. i. 6.
[7] Ruth iii. 3.
[8] 2 Par. xxviii. 15.
[9] Ps. xxii. 5; ciii. 15; Prov. xxvii. 9; Eccles. ix. 8.
[10] 3 Kings xix. 16; Is. lxi. 1; 1 Sam. xvi. 3; Lev. viii. 12; Ps. cxxxii. 2; Ecclesiasticus xlv. 18.
[11] Luke vii. 36-50; Acts xxvi. 6-13; John xii. 1-8.

employed by our Lord in miracles of healing;[1] and we meet with it as a biblical term suggested by the name of the Messias.[2]

We see already the two rites of imposition of hands and healing associated in the consecration of Levites, and in the accounts of healing given in the Gospel, as well as in the Epistle of St. James.[3]

We are therefore quite prepared to see them in the writings of primitive Christianity.

Gnostic literature gives evidence of a special predilection for the ceremony of anointing, and from the time of the second century, when Catholic literature is still well-nigh silent, we can accumulate an abundance of instances on this point. We must be careful not to jump hastily to conclusions, as, for example, to put down to Gnostic influence the increasing spread of the rite of anointing in the liturgy of the Church. As many of the Gnostics came from the great Church, we don't know what they carried away from it, and what they introduced of their own accord; and therefore we are not in a position to dogmatize on the origin of this anointing of the Gnostics. We can only lay down that in the third century the practice of anointing is attested in the East and then in the West.[4]

[1] Luke x. 34; Mark vi. 13; James v. 14, 15; Matt. vii. 33; viii. 23; John ix. 6-11.

[2] Luke iv. 18; Acts iv. 27; x. 38; Heb. i. 9; 2 Cor. i. 21, 22; 1 John ii. 20, 27.

[3] Ex. xxx. 30; Num. viii. 10; Mark vi. 6; viii. 23; xvi. 18; Acts ix. 12, 17; xxviii. 8; Mark vi. 13; James v. 14, 15.

[4] The Marcian (Valentinian) Gnostics according to St. Ireneus, and the Naassene Gnostics according to St. Hippolytus; Theodotus as the *Excerpta* of Clement of Alexandria narrates; and the (Gnostic) *Acts of St. Thomas*, etc. Amongst the Catholics the rite of

It is clear that the Church in the third century possessed the Sacrament of Confirmation. For the Latin Church of Africa we have the testimonies of Tertullian and St. Cyprian. Tertullian mentions the Sacrament of the Holy Ghost coming between Baptism and the Eucharist.[1] St. Cyprian often speaks of the necessity of being born again by "both one and the other Sacrament,"[2] namely Baptism and Confirmation.

For the Church of Latin Africa the distinctive rite for the Sacrament of the Holy Ghost is the imposition of hands, a legacy from the Apostles. We see the same in Asia Minor, according to the testimony of St. Firmilian, the Bishop of Neocæsarea.[3] At the beginning of the fourth century the Canons of the Council of Elvira[4] bear the same witness in regard to Spain; and the like can be said of Gaul, as attested by the Council of Arles[5] in 314. St. Hilary[6] and St. Jerome[7] lay down that imposition of hands is still the rite of Confirmation.

Anointing appears in the Roman liturgy for Confirmation with St. Hippolytus, at the beginning of the third century.[8] We find it again during the

anointing appears in the second century in Theophilus of Antioch, in his *Ad Autolycum*, I, 12, without a definite reference to Confirmation.

[1] *De Praescriptione haeret.*, 36, 40; *De res. carnis*, 8.

[2] Epp. lxix. 11; lxx. 3; lxxii. 1; lxxiii. 6, 9, 21; lxxiv. 5, 7.

[3] Ep. lxxv. 7, 8, 12, 18.

[4] Canons, 38, 77.

[5] Canon 8.

[6] *In Matthæum*, c. iv., 27.

[7] *Dial. c. Lucifer*, 9.

[8] *Traditio Apostolica; Fragmenta Vermensia latina*, p. 111, ed. Hauler. Leipzig, 1900.

pontificate of Cornelius[1] (251-253), and during the reign of Pope Sylvester[2] (314-334). Alexandria appears to have used it from the days of Origen.[3] But the most numerous as well as the clearest evidences come from the East: for instance, the testimony of the Council of Laodicea[4] in the fourth century, the explicit warrant of St. Cyril of Jerusalem in his Catechism,[5] and the witness of St. Basil, who speaks of the silence of written tradition and appeals to oral tradition.[6]

In the fifth century, we have evidence that the rite of anointing is the predominant one.

In the well-known decretal of Innocent I, addressed to Decentius the Bishop of Eugubium on the 19th of March 416, we read:[7]

"The anointing of the forehead of children is obviously a duty which is clearly reserved to the Bishop. For the priests, although they are in the second rank of the priesthood, have not the honour of the Episcopacy. It is a pontifical power, reserved to bishops, to anoint or to give the Holy Ghost, the Paraclete. This is proved not only from the practice of the Church, but also from the Acts of the Apostles, where we read that Peter and John were sent to give the Holy Ghost to those who had already been baptized. In effect, the priests in baptizing can anoint with chrism the baptized

[1] *Ep. ad Fabium Antischenum;* in Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.*, vi, 43.
[2] According to the *Liber Pontificalis*, edition of Duchesne, t. 1, pp. 77 and 171.
[3] *In Romanos*, vi, 2.
[4] Canon 48.
[5] *Catech.*, xvi, 26; xviii, 33; xxi, 1.
[6] *De Spiritu Sancto*, xxvii, 66.
[7] Denzinger-Bannwart, n. 98.

whether apart from the bishop or in his presence, so long as this chrism has been consecrated by the bishop; but he cannot anoint the forehead with this same oil; that is a rite reserved to the bishops, when they confer the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete. In regard to the words used, I cannot give them to you. If I did, it would be betraying (the secret), and not giving the advice you ask for."

This rescript lengthens the lines as traced in the liturgy of St. Hippolytus; and whilst it prolongs the lines it makes them more definite. We see here the prerogative of the bishop as minister of Confirmation; we see also that this function is identical with that which the Apostles performed; in addition we are given the anointing either in place of the imposition of hands or associated with it; the sealing or the anointing of the forehead giving the Holy Ghost is distinguished from the anointing in Baptism; the consecration of the chrism is reserved to the bishop; and lastly the words of the liturgy are kept from us as coming under the discipline of the secret; all these things are proved for us by this remarkable document.

We came across exactly the same tradition in the homilies, and the pastoral letters of St. Leo, St. Gelasius, and St. Gregory, as well as in the *Praedestinatus* and in the writings of Arnobius the Younger along with the letter of John the Deacon addressed to Senarius. We find it lastly in the Gelasian and Gregorian Sacramentaries.

We find special emphasis laid still in Latin Africa on the Apostolic rite of imposition. It is stressed by St. Augustine and Victor de Vita in the fifth century, and the Pseudo-Primasius in the sixth. And St. Augustine is well aware that a change has

taken place since the time of the Apostles. Neither is he unaware of the many variations of the same rite used in the reconciliation of penitents, and in the ordination of priests. In his works on Baptism against the Donatists he writes:[1] "Those have not the charity of God, who do not cherish the unity of the Church: and so we are right in saying that the Holy Ghost is given only in the Catholic Church. Nowadays the Holy Spirit is no longer given by the imposition of hands with the accompanying witness of miracles in the temporal order which we can see, as happened formerly to strengthen the faith of the simple and to help the spread of the Infant Church. Who therefore expects that those on whom hands have been imposed to give the Holy Spirit, should immediately begin to speak in tongues? . . . Nevertheless the Catholic Church alone has preserved charity, and if this is wanting other gifts can be known and approved, but they cannot operate and release. The case of the imposition of hands is different from that of Baptism, which cannot be repeated. What is the imposition of hands in fine except a prayer said over a man?" In regard to the rite of anointing, it was already practised by the African Church; and this is true not only of the anointing in Baptism, as already witnessed by Tertullian and St. Cyprian, but also the unction which gives the Holy Spirit. St. Augustine refers to it for example in his commentary on the first Epistle of St. John:[2] "The spiritual anointing is the Holy Spirit, and the

[1] III, xvi, 21.

[2] In I Joan., Tract., iii, 5: Unctio spiritualis ipse est Spiritus Sanctus, cujus sacramentum est in unctione visibili.

sacrament confirming this gift is the visible anointing."

The Church at Milan, being under the direct influence of Rome, uses the rite of anointing, by which is given the seal of the Spirit, *signaculum spirituale*. We have an unbroken chain of witnesses in St. Leno of Verona, St. Ambrose in his *De Mysteriis*, the Pseudo-Ambrose in his *De Sacramentis*, St. Gaudentius of Brescia, St. Peter Chrysologus, and St. Maximus of Turin.

The ancient Church of Gaul bears testimony to the same continuity. We have Prosper of Aquitaine and St. Salvian in the fifth century, as well as the Council of Orange in 441; then come St. Avitus of Vienne, St. Cæsarea of Arles, St. Gregory of Tours, and Fortunatus in the sixth century. In the seventh century the ancient Sacramentaries of Antun, Auxerre and Bobbio still witness to the rite of anointing. But a reaction sets in with the period of the Carolingian renaissance: side by side with the anointing of the forehead we find the imposition of hands in vogue as the principal rite to confer the gift of the Holy Ghost. We find evidence of this in Alcuin, in Leidrad the Bishop of Lyons, in Magnus the Bishop of Lens, Theodulfus the Bishop of Orleans, Jessé Bishop of Amiens, Jonas Bishop of Orleans, as well as in Amalarius Bishop of Treves, Amalarius of Metz, Walafrid Strabo of Fulda, Rabanus Maurus of Mayence; again we see it in the Canons of Paris in 839, and in those of Meaux in 845. The name *Confirmation*, already used by Pope St. Leo, becomes widespread at this time.

In the Irish Church of the fifth century we find the rite of anointing in the case of St. Patrick;

and in the English Church we meet it in the fifth century in Fastidius, and in the seventh century in St. Bede, but St. Bede does not forget in addition the apostolic rite of imposition of hands, nourished as he was on the food of the Holy Scriptures.

Going on to the Church of Spain we learn that from the fifth century beginning with St. Pacian of Barcelona the rite of anointing was used. The same rite is met with in the hymns of Prudentius in the fifth century, in the Canons of the third Council of Braga (572) in the sixth, and in the seventh century in the Canons of the second Council of Seville (619), as well as in those of the fourth Council of Toledo (633), and in the works of St. Isidore of Seville and St. Ildephonsus of Toledo, and lastly in the *Liber Ordinum* of the Mozarabic Liturgy, which also contains the imposition of hands.

The Egyptian Church did not forget the apostolic rite: St. Cyril of Alexandria and St. Isidore of Pelusia give us commentaries on it in the fifth century. But the documents known as *The Constitutions of the Egyptian Church* and *The Canons of Hippolytus*, which come to us from Egypt, set forth the rite of anointing as predominant; and these works seem to be connected with the ancient Roman Liturgy, although the exact link is difficult to find out.

The documents of the Syriac and Byzantine Churches testify almost exclusively to the rite of anointing. These documents are: *The Apostolic Constitutions*, the works of Theoderet, the *Replies to the Orthodox* of Pseudo-Justin, the *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* of Pseudo-Dionysius and

also his *Testament of Our Lord Jesus Christ* (in Syriac), the works of Job the Monk, Timothy of Constantinople and St. John Damascene.

We can add to the documents, which embody the Catholic tradition, the more or less clear testimony of the separated Churches.

It would seem that the Nestorians of Syria ceased to use the Sacrament of Confirmation from the fifth to the seventh century. They still remembered for all that the gift of the Holy Spirit, but they connected it with an anointing given before Baptism. In more recent days the Nestorians have as a rule resumed the primitive practice.

The Armenians seem to have been in error quite early in regard to the essential rite of Christian initiation. Their error was to require, as though of equal necessity, the three rites of Baptism, Chrism and the Eucharist. The closer relations with Rome in the fourteenth century were the means of eliminating this disagreement in the case of the United Armenian Church.

Since the time of Photius, the Greek schismatics have unanimously held that the gift of the Holy Ghost was given by the rite of anointing; and in this they continued the belief of the Greek Church before the schism.

Thus we see in process everywhere a development which led to the rite of anointing, very probably ecclesiastical in its origin, taking the place of the apostolic rite of the imposition of hands.

The theologians and canonists of the twelfth century took cognizance of this evolution; and Hugo of St. Victor notes the end of this development when he wrote:[1] "The imposition of hands,

[1] *De Sacramentis Chistianae fidei*, II, viii, 1.

generally called Confirmation, in which the Christian is anointed with chrism on the forehead by the imposition of hands, is reserved to the bishops as the successors of the Apostles, to whom it belongs to sign and give the Holy Spirit, just as we see that in the Primitive Church the Apostles only had the power of conferring the Holy Ghost by the imposition of hands." These words tell us, in accordance with the general sentiment, of a personal effort to link up the developed rite with the primitive one, by detecting the imposition of hands handed down from the Apostles in the very act of signing with the oil of anointing.

We find here and there views much more individualistic put forward in regard to the institution of the sacrament. For instance we find in Alan de l'Isle[1] the opinion that it was instituted on the occasion when the Risen Christ appeared to the Apostles and breathing on them, said: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." Alexander of Hales[2] went much further afield to find the institution. He had the boldness to advance the view that neither Christ nor the Apostles instituted the Sacrament of Confirmation, but that the Church set it up during the Carolingian period at the Council of Meaux (845). A statement as fantastic as that ought not to be taken literally. Alexander doubtless meant that the gift of the Holy Ghost was in the Church from the beginning more or less indeterminately, and that subsequently the Council defined the way it should be administered, especially in regard to the person who was to administer it. Even that implies a gross exaggeration.

[1] *Contra Haereticos*, I, 66.
[2] Summa, IV, q. 9, m. 1.

St. Thomas and others opposed these wavering views, and reasserted explicitly the institution by Christ, to whom alone it belongs to make a sign efficacious of grace.[1] He did not specify any exact time in regard to the institution; but laid down that the anointing with chrism, made on the forehead by the Bishop, was the essential matter. It was the opinion of St. Thomas that the Apostles themselves used chrism in the imposition of hands, although the Acts are silent about it. What led him to that view was clearly the authority of Pseudo-Dionysius, whom he thought was a contemporary of the Apostles. This opinion of St. Thomas was apparently based on a slender foundation. However, the principles he laid down were enough to enable men to make the necessary corrections. As constituting the essential elements of the institution he laid down first of all the express wish of Christ; then he demanded a proper conformity between the sacramental rite and the special effect of the sacrament, this conformity being made clear in the tongues of fire on the day of Pentecost, oil being specially adapted for the kindling of fire; the adaptation was the work of man, revealing the intention of Christ.

A certain want of determination in the material object as far as the institution of Christ is concerned, that is the principle which enables us to fill in the lacuna between the texts of the New Testament and the sacrament as we have it to-day. This postulate is in line with the broad principles laid down by St. Thomas in regard to the institution of the sacraments, and is in conformity with the teaching of the Church, which has always claimed the right to

[1] IIIa, q. 72, a. 1.

determine what was left indeterminate so far as the divine institution is concerned, so long as the substance of the sacrament is preserved (*salva eorum substantia*).[1]

The teaching of St. Thomas is echoed in the decree, *Ad Armenos*, which was issued by the Council of Florence (1439); this same teaching forms the base of the definitions of Trent.

Nowadays the complete rite of the Sacrament of Confirmation consists, first of all, in the Bishop imposing hands collectively on all those who are to be confirmed, and then in his anointing the forehead with the sacred chrism. Many decrees of the Roman Congregations make it clear that the essence of the sacrament consists in the anointing with chrism, and that the imposition of hands at the beginning need not be supplied if it has been omitted for one cause or another in the case of one of those who are being confirmed. If therefore we wish to find a relic of the apostolic rite, we must look for it in the anointing, as Hugo of St. Victor suggests, and not in the first imposition of hands.

In regard to the external variations of the form used in the sacrament, they do not touch the validity of the sacrament. We have in the East this impersonal form of words: "The seal of the gift of the Holy Ghost. Amen"; whilst in the West we find: "I sign thee with the sign of the cross, and I confirm thee with the chrism of salvation, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."

[1] Sacraments are efficacious *signs*. Therefore it is the *significance* which is the substance. If, then, the significance of the matter and form is the same, then the substance of the sacrament is not changed. In the case

III. *The Minister of Confirmation*

Who is it that is empowered to confer the Sacrament of Confirmation? If we consult Scripture, as we see below, we find that it is clearly emphasized as the special function of the Apostles; and, according to the constant tradition of the Church, the bishops, as the successors of the Apostles, have this prerogative.

But nevertheless the common law of the Church makes it clear that the power can be communicated to others. For centuries past, the priests of the Greek Church administer Confirmation by virtue of a universal delegation; and in the Latin Church priests at times confer it by virtue of a special delegation. What is the origin of this delegation, and what are its limits? We will briefly set out this point of history and of law.

At times people have thought that the Acts of the Apostles[1] implied that Ananias—a layman apparently—imposed hands on Paul to confer the Holy Ghost. If that were so, it would be the result of a very special dispensation of God, who is doubtless master of His gifts. But the text is far from implying this interpretation. We read, five verses previously, that Ananias received a commission to go to find Paul in order to impose hands on him to restore his sight.[2] It is clearly a case of one of those instances where the imposition of hands was performed to effect a cure, such as we meet more than

of Confirmation the significance of the matter is not changed; and therefore the substance of the sacrament is not changed.—*Translator's note.*

[1] Acts ix. 17.

[2] Acts ix. 12.

once in the writings of St. Luke[1]—not to mention any other evangelist. Saul was in addition filled with the Holy Ghost. The question arises, is this fresh operation of divine power directly attached to the act of Ananias? There is no statement to that effect in the text. Even granting that it is linked to the imposition of hands, it would not be the Sacrament of Confirmation. The reason is that, according to the Acts of the Apostles and the whole teaching of the Church, the Sacrament of Confirmation presupposes Baptism. This sacrament Saul had not received when he received back his sight, and there is nothing to suggest that Ananias, in giving him the Holy Spirit, gave anything more than the initial outpouring which is usually given by Baptism.

According to the tradition of the first centuries the power to confirm belongs to the bishops alone. In the third century there is unanimity on this point between St. Cornelius of Rome, St. Cyprian of Carthage, and St. Firmilian of Cæsarea. According to the Council of Elvira in Spain in the fourth century, a catechumen, who is baptized in a case of necessity on a journey, ought to go to a bishop afterwards to receive the imposition of hands. St. Jerome speaks of Baptism given in reclaimed parishes by a priest or deacon who is going about from place to place, but leaving the imposition of hands to be given by the bishop at his own convenience. We are already aware of the fact that Pope Innocent I, in the fifth century, wrote to Decentius laying down this prerogative of the bishops. Cases of similar claims on behalf of bishops are frequently found in the course of the

[1] Luke iv. 40; xiii. 13; Acts xxviii. 8.

and is wroth because Rome challenges the power of their priests to confirm. At the present time the clergy of the East enjoy an age-long prescriptive right, and it would be difficult to put one's finger on the exact time it began.

Pope Benedict XII, in the fourteenth century, called on the Armenians to go back to the primitive tradition of the Church in regard to this question of the administration of Confirmation. In the fifteenth century, we have the Council of Florence laying down the prerogative enjoyed by the bishops, but at the same time admitting that priests had been empowered to give the sacrament in case of urgent necessity.

A certain bishop of the Cyclades stated at the Council of Trent, in the sixteenth century, that Greek priests gave the Sacrament of Confirmation, and appealed to the authority of Pope Martin (+655). There is no proof in writing extant bearing on this permission given centuries before.[1] But the Roman Church decided that she was satisfied with the reasons given by the Greek priests at the Council of Florence. On the 30th of August 1595, Pope Clement VIII issued a regulation to the Greek priests living in Italy.[2] By virtue of this the Greek priests were allowed to continue to validly confirm the adherents of their own rite, but they were forbidden to confirm those who used the Latin rite. These regulations were laid down again by Benedict XIV in 1742.[3]

A decree of the Holy Office on the 15th of

[1] See *Acta Tridentina,* ed *Goerresgesellshaft,* t. v, p. 932.
[2] Denzinger-Bannwart, n. 1086.
[3] Denzinger-Bannwart, n. 1458.

January 1766, in the pontificate of Clement XIII, laid down special regulations for countries in the East where priests enjoyed a permanent permission to administer Confirmation.

In regard to the Latin clergy, the power to confirm belongs, *ipso iure*,[1] to Cardinals of the Roman Church, to abbots and prelates *nullius*, to vicars and prefects apostolic, with the proviso that they can only use this power within the limits of their own territory and during the period of their holding office.

The priests of the Latin rite can, if they have a personal indult, confirm those of their own rite, for example in a missionary country, within the limits laid down by the indult.[2]

The power to confirm does not carry with it the power to prepare the chrism, for the blessing of the chrism normally remains the special prerogative of the bishop, both in the East and the West. The question arises, could priests be delegated to perform this also? There is a discussion on this point. The precedents sometimes quoted are doubtful in the case of the East,[3] and are still more unconvincing in regard to the West.[4]

A difficult question of metaphysics—in the religious realm—is raised by the case of the extraordinary minister of Confirmation. By virtue of what power does the delegated minister confer the sacrament? Three replies have been made to this question:

1*st Reply*.—The delegated minister confirms by virtue of the power he received at his ordination,

[1] *Corpus Iuris Canonici*, 782-783.
[2] *Corpus Iuris Canonici*, 782-784.
[3] Maruta de Maipherkat, a Syrian (about 400), can. 60.
[4] John the Deacon, *Ep. ad Senarium*, 8.

without any further power being given to him. This reply, given by Durandus in the fourteenth century, is opposed to the mind of the old scholastics, for it does not explain the restrictions placed on the power of the priests who have received ordination. We can hardly consider this at all probable, and more especially since Pius X[1] severely criticized a publication of Prince Max of Saxony, wherein, without proper consideration, he revived this old idea.

2nd Reply.—The delegated minister confirms by virtue of a double power, the power of orders and the power of jurisdiction. They quote the analogy of Christian marriage, where the priest, empowered by his ordination, takes part not as a minister, but as a witness qualified to do so by his ordinary or delegated jurisdiction. But the analogy seems to break down. For it is a fact that a bishop, who is empowered by his ordination to give the Sacrament of Confirmation, can confer it validly—although unlawfully—outside the limits of his diocese in a place where he has no jurisdiction.

3rd Reply.—The delegated minister confirms by virtue of the power received in his ordination, but reinforced by the fact of delegation and by his being made capable of doing a work which normally is beyond his powers. This solution seems more correct, for it takes account more of what is essentially transitory and accidental in the power of the delegated minister.[2]

[1] Ep. *Ex quo nono, Ad Delegatos apostolicos in Oriente*, 26th December 1910.

[2] See Bellarmire, *De Sacramento Confirmationis*, c. xii.

IV. *Confirmation and Reconciliation*

The Sacrament of Confirmation, which was formerly closely bound up with Baptism in the rites of the initiation of a Christian, remains as a rule associated with it according to the usage of the Eastern Church, where the two sacraments are given at the same time by the same priest. On the other hand, in the Western Church, where Confirmation is reserved to the bishop, the rule is for the rites to be separated, and thus the distinction between the two sacraments is emphasized.

It is a more difficult matter to discern in the course of history the relations between Confirmation and the sacrament by which sinners are reconciled from sins committed after Baptism. We know that imposition of hands was the original rite of absolution, as it was of Confirmation. When the practice of anointing was well established in the Christian liturgy, it was found in the ritual of Penance as well as in that of Confirmation; and we note in particular that the reconciliation of heretics was performed with an anointing accompanied by a form of words very similar to those used in Confirmation. This similarity is seen to-day in the Roman Pontifical.

This close likeness between the rites, or rather their material identity, opened the way to confusion; and we have every reason to believe that it actually led to it. It was not necessary for the bishops always to have a perfectly clear realization how one rite was quite separate from the other as a condition for the valid administration of both. In both one and the other the Holy Spirit is invoked; in one

case to complete the work of Baptism, in the other to give back new life to souls dead to the life of grace. Ideas so kindred as these did not seem necessarily distinct at a time when the threefold division of the sacraments had not been made, and when people had not even grasped the sevenfold sacramental system. We know that this state of things lasted until the twelfth century. We shall not then be surprised to find in the old texts indications of a confusion of ideas somewhat far-reaching.

But it is very important to realize that the distinction did actually exist in the Church more or less clearly, although it was not actually made by all. We have the warrant of old texts to enable us to prove that the Church realized that on the one hand there was the Sacrament of the Spirit as a rite of initiation not to be given a second time; and on the other hand there was the Sacrament of Penance, which regenerates souls dead to grace, and which can be repeated. Leaving aside all distinctions St. Augustine could write:[1] "It is not the case with the imposition of hands as it is with Baptism, which cannot be repeated. For what indeed is the imposition of hands but a prayer said over a man?" For all that St. Augustine was not one of those who did not distinguish Confirmation from the Sacrament of Penance. We can note the fact that this same distinction is made on many occasions both before and after the time of St. Augustine.

In the middle of the third century, Pope St. Stephen gave his well-known decision on the question

[1] *De Baptismo Contra Donatistas,* III, xvi, 21; Manus impositio non, sicut Baptismus, repeti non potest. Quid enim est aliud nisi oratio super hominem?

of the Baptism of heretics:[1] "When a person comes to you from any sect whatever, let no innovation be made, except what has been handed down by tradition: do not do more than impose hands for penance." There we have an act of reconciliation. At the same time, and amongst an opposite party, St. Cyprian uses with suitable exactitude the two expressions: "imposition of hands to give the Holy Spirit," and "imposition of hands for penance." In the case of heretics, for instance the Novatians, who have been baptized in their own sect, St. Cyprian does not recognize this Baptism and considers such people as not baptized at all. He requires therefore in their case a complete initiation:[2] "because it is of little avail to impose hands to give the Holy Spirit, unless they also receive the Baptism of the Church. If they receive both sacraments, then they can be said to be fully sanctified, and to be the sons of God." There are then the two sacraments of the initiation of a Christian. On the other hand, if there is a question of Christians properly baptized in the Church, but who afterwards fall into schism or heresy, then they are reconciled merely by the imposition of hands used in the case of penitents:[3] "when it is proved that people have been baptized by us and then gone over to heresy, it is sufficient to impose hands on them as is done for penitents, if having realized their sin and error they return to the truth and to their mother." Contemporary with this testimony we have St. Denys of Alexandria, who gives equally clear evidence to the tradition in regard to the

[1] Cypr., Ep., lxxiv, 1.
[2] Cypr., Ep., lxxii, 1.
[3] *Ep.*, lxxi, 2.

reconciliation of heretics by the imposition of hands accompanied by prayer.[1]

It would be an easy task to multiply instances, in the course of the history of the Church, where such a distinction is clearly present to the mind of the Church, in spite of a tendency to obscure it through confusion here and there. In this matter the witness of Pope St. Leo the Great is especially clear. We have seen that with him the essential rite of Confirmation is the anointing with chrism, a rite which has by the middle of the fifth century been firmly established in the Roman liturgy. He speaks on that point with unwavering consistency. When he deals with the reconciliation of heretics, we see a like consistency. He no longer speaks of anointing, but of the imposition of hands made by the bishop with the invocation of the Holy Ghost:[2] in this case that is the essential rite in his eyes. Thus we realize that, in his mind, the reconciliation of heretics is a separate thing from Confirmation. And for all that, it nevertheless is also the work of the Holy Ghost. But Pope Leo does not adopt the idea that a man can receive the Holy Ghost outside the Catholic Church.

Clearer still is the evidence of Pope Vigilius in the next century. He writes to Profuturus, the Bishop of Braga,[3] telling him that converts from

[1] Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.*, vii, 2.

[2] *Epp.*, clix, 7, *Ad Nicetam Aquilesensem;* clxvi, 2, *Ad Noenem Ravennatem;* clxvii, *Ad Rusticum Narbonensem.*

[3] Ep., 1, 3: Their reconciliation is brought about, not by that imposition of hands which takes place with the invocation of the Holy Ghost, but by that imposition by which the fruit of repentance is acquired and the restoration to the holy communion is effected.

Arianism can be reconciled by the imposition of hands, but adds that he must not confuse this imposition of hands for the reconciliation of penitents with that which confers the Holy Ghost.

St. Gregory the Great tells us of new features. He notes[1] the fact that Arians are reconciled in the West by imposition of hands, but in the East by anointing with sacred chrism. These two parallel rites are rites of penance.

St. Gregory II forbids Confirmation to be repeated.[2]

Urban II attributes to the imposition of hands the power to revive the grace of the sacraments received in heresy.[3] This power belongs to a rite of penance; it cannot pertain to Confirmation.

We might without difficulty add to these documents of the Holy See many other writings of a private character. These would abundantly prove the fact that, in spite of the occasional confusion between the Sacrament of Confirmation and the Sacrament of Penance, such confusion has never been sanctioned by prescription in the Church.

V. *The Effects of Confirmation*

The giving of the gift of the Holy Ghost, which is the special effect of the Sacrament of Confirmation, is the fulfilment of the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament which we have already noted,

[1] *Ep.*, xi, 67 *Ad Quiricum et ceteros in Hibernia episcopos.*
[2] *Ep.*, xiv, 4 *Ad Bonifacium episcopum.*
[3] *Ep.*, cclxxiii *Ad Lucium Papiensem.*

and is more especially the realization of the promises of our Lord:[1]

"But the Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring all things to your mind, whatsoever I shall have said to you.—But when the Paraclete cometh, whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceedeth from the Father, he shall give testimony of me.—And I send the promise of my Father upon you: but stay you in the city, till you be endued with power from on high.—But you shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you, and you shall be witnesses unto me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the uttermost part of the earth."

The effect is manifest immediately after the outpouring of the Spirit: from the day of Pentecost, the Apostles with Peter at their head confess the Lord without fear:[2]

"Ye men of Judea, and all you that dwell in Jerusalem, be this known to you, and with your ears receive my words . . . Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you, by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as you also know: this same being delivered up, by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, you by the hands of wicked men have crucified and slain. Whom God hath raised up, having loosened the sorrows of hell, as it was impossible that he should be holden by it . . . Therefore let all the house of Israel know most certainly that God hath made both Lord, and Christ, this same Jesus, whom you have crucified."

[1] John xiv. 26; xv. 26; Luke xxiv. 49; Acts i. 8.
[2] Acts ii. 14, 22-24, 36.

"And with great power did the Apostles give testimony of the resurrection of Jesus Christ our Lord: and great grace was in them all. . . . And they indeed went from the presence of the council rejoicing, that they were accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus." [1]

This strength they receive from the Spirit which is in them. Isaias, in pointing to Christ, laid down this first source: "And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him: the spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the spirit of counsel and of fortitude, the spirit of knowledge and of godliness. And he shall be filled with the spirit of the fear of the Lord." [2]

The same Spirit flows from the Master on to the disciples. St. Hilary of Poitiers is one of the first of the Fathers to recognize in this wonderful outpouring the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost;[3] then many others echo this idea. The Council of Florence lays stress on the gift of fortitude, *Spiritus sanctus ad robur*. By the Sacrament of Confirmation all Christians receive the same Spirit in order to enable them to confess Christ before men and face their enemies without fear: that is indeed the reason why their forehead is signed with the sign of the cross.

An indelible sign is placed on the soul by this sacrament not only *de iure* but in fact. Like Baptism, Confirmation cannot be repeated, for it also places a character[4] on the soul.

[1] Acts iv. 33; v. 41.
[2] Is. xi. 2, 3.
[3] In Matt. xv. 10.
[4] St. Thomas, IIIa, q. 72, a. 5: As Baptism is a spiritual rebirth to the Christian life, so Confirmation

This character is not independent of the character of Baptism, but presupposes it and is grounded on it. By Baptism we are born to the Christian life; by Confirmation we are given strength in Christ. Being thus advanced to adult age, it is the duty of the Christian to wield the arms of light and confront danger. It is not necessary to wait for a number of years in order to acquire this spiritual strength. Accordingly it is the wish of the Church that her children should receive this sign at an early age in order to perfect in every way the work of Baptism. Confirmation gives a fresh outpouring of sanctifying grace; it completes the sacramental character by giving it new features; in the realm of actual grace it confers a new title to it.

There is not a strict command to receive Confirmation in order to be saved as in the case of Baptism. But the graces this sacrament gives are always valuable, and can be even necessary. For a Christian to neglect to receive the Sacrament of the Holy Ghost would be a sign of ingratitude to the Providence of God, whose will it has been to mark out the way of salvation with suitable means of assistance.

is a spiritual growth developing man to a perfect spiritual age. . . . And so it is clear that a character is given in the Sacrament of Confirmation.

APPENDIX

THE BAPTISMAL CATECHISM

ACCORDING TO SAINT AUGUSTINE

THE institution of Baptism, appealing to the faith and generosity of converts, required a preparatory institution to put souls in the proper dispositions for receiving the grace of the sacrament. During the beginnings of the apostolic mission, the preparation could be a summary one—the extraordinary effusion of the Holy Ghost completing the work already begun by the Apostles' preaching. Thus, on Pentecost, the crowds converted by Peter's voice placed themselves at the discretion, so to speak, of the Twelve, and Peter said to them: "Do penance and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins: and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts ii. 38). The invitation of the eunuch by the deacon Philip immediately follows their conversation about the Scriptures. "And as they went on their way they came to a certain water, and the eunuch said: See, here is water, what doth hinder me from being baptized? And Philip said: If thou believest with all thy heart thou mayest. And he answering said: I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him" (Acts

viii. 36-38). To the period of inspiration was to succeed that of organization. The training of catechumens became methodical, and was put in charge of the Church's hierarchy.

From the very beginning of the third century, the baptismal catechism appears in full vigour at Carthage in the *De Baptismo* of Tertullian. The Fathers of the fourth and fifth centuries, in their pastoral homilies, have left us a good idea of the instructions given to the Church's recruits before and after Baptism. The Catechisms of St. Cyril of Jerusalem, the great Catechism of St. Gregory Nyssa and others extend considerably beyond the limits of the baptismal liturgy and include an account of the whole of Christian doctrine. In this very active branch of literature, the "*De catechizandis rudibus*" [1] of St. Augustine occupies a place apart. It is not addressed directly to catechumens, but forms a guide for the use of the catechist. The exceptional importance of this work leads us to search in it for the complement to the pages which have just been read. Towards the year 400, face to face with Manichæan propaganda, and in the midst of the Donatist conflict, the Bishop of Hippo draws up a programme adapted to the needs of his day, and pays special attention to an extremely delicate point, namely, how to make the first contact with the candidate for Baptism.

To this soul, often still hesitating, the catechist must bring light and encouragement. But a sure touch is necessary to handle a matter which involves the whole of the problem of religion, and decides the course of an entire life. Augustine approaches

[1] Migne, P.L., xl, 309-348. This work can be read in the recent edition of J. P. Christopher, *S. Aurelii Augustini Hipponiensis episcopi de catechizandis rudibus liber unus*', translated with an Introduction and Commentary. Washington, the Catholic University of America, 1926, 8vo.

this theme with the loftiness of outlook and tenderness of heart which are natural to him, whence the capital interest of the work. It astonishes us to learn that this interest has sometimes been completely under-rated. Erasmus saw in the book nothing but obscure subtilty and a displeasing prolixity.[1] Rather should it be said that the Bishop of Hippo marks out for the catechist a luminous path and, on the road, he deals in a masterly fashion with some of the most serious problems of theology. The careful reading of the whole text cannot be replaced by a dry and colourless analysis of it; nevertheless, we must resign ourselves to the latter, in order to distinguish the leading ideas of the work.

Deogratias, a deacon of Carthage, has asked Augustine for written instructions on baptismal catechism. In the course of his ministry he is often troubled by the difficulty of the task and by the consciousness of his own insufficiency. In trying to comply with his request Augustine believes that he is performing a duty not only towards this deacon who is dear to him, but also towards the whole Church. First of all, he desires to put his correspondent on his guard against a feeling of discouragement. The catechist's words may seem, to himself, dry and uninteresting—while to the catechumen they appear ardent and efficacious; the latter effect is all that matters. Augustine himself has experienced this contrast. He is rarely satisfied with his own efforts: nevertheless he observes that these efforts penetrate souls and do their work. Familiarity with what he teaches has made his teaching lose its charm for him, but that same teaching may have very great charm for those who have never heard it before. In such a ministry it is of utmost importance not to lose heart: so the teaching will be the more living and pleasanter.

[1] Erasmus, Ep., xx, 2: *Obscurae subtilitatis et parum amoenae prolixitatis.*

Men will take more delight in it, and God also. "God loves a cheerful giver."

Augustine speaks first of the historical outline which is indispensable to catechism; then of the way in which the will is to be inclined; and finally of the joyful disposition so appropriate in the catechist.

The historical instruction calls for discretion. One must, of course, begin with the creation of the world—but there will be no need to go through the whole of the Old Testament. A choice has to be made; essential points and interesting aspects can be insisted upon only at the risk of wearying the listener and of confusing him. What is necessary is to open up the road to charity, which proceeds from a pure heart, a good conscience and sincere faith: this goal must never be lost sight of. Towards it tend all the writings of the Old Testament, and, in their own special ways, the patriarchs and prophets also. Before his birth, Jacob stretched his hand forth from his mother's womb; his body was to follow afterwards. The patriarchs and the prophets are the hand of the Christ who is to come; the body will appear in the New Testament. The Lord came to manifest His love by reconciling us with God—so true is it that charity is the object of the commandment and the fulness of the Law. And how shall we correspond with the love with which Christ has surrounded us? By loving our brethren. A love descending from such heights is well able to confound our intellects and ravish our hearts; its aim, already indicated by the Law and the Prophets, is summarized in two precepts: to love God and to love our neighbour. The New Testament was enshrined within the Old—but beneath a veil; the New Testament withdrew the veil. Those who understand the Scriptures only according to the flesh remain under the yoke of fear; those who understand them according to the spirit are liberated by the gift of charity. Now, charity has no worse

enemy than envy, and envy is the daughter of pride; because of this, our Lord Jesus Christ, the God made Man, desired to emphasize the precept of love by the example of His prodigious humility. Moreover, no man can build upon foundations of fear alone. It may happen that the catechumen has not the right dispositions; it is the catechist's business to put his soul into them. For that reason the catechist will endeavour to become thoroughly acquainted with him, either by gleaning information from others, or by questioning the candidate himself. If the latter lies in order to make himself appear better than he is, it is possible to turn even the lies to good use, by inspiring him with the desire of being in reality what he has been pretending to be. If he manifests dispositions which are opposed to the profession of the Christian faith, it will be necessary to make him realize, with a few well-chosen remarks, all that is lacking in him; salutary reflections must be urged upon him. If he declares that he has received some Heaven-inspired communication, the catechist has there all ready opened for him a gateway to more sound teaching, a path towards the comprehension of the designs of Providence as revealed in the Scriptures.

Now is the time to influence the will, by disclosing perspectives of the resurrection and the Last Judgment; the torments of the damned, and the reign of the just with Christ. The soul should be fortified against temptations and scandals; scandals from without, given by Gentiles, Jews and heretics; and scandals from within, occasioned by those Christians who are as straw upon the threshing-floor of the Church. The catechist should point out that all these things have been anticipated, and that the faithful ought to find in them an opportunity of beholding the longanimity of Providence. For there are so-called Christians who, in body, belong to the Church and enjoy the toleration of Providence

throughout this life—but who can hardly hope for salvation in the next. The catechumen must be told that he will find in the Church true and good Christians enough, if he himself really tries to be such a one. He must be told to put his trust, not in man, but in God alone, who calls upon him to justice and who places his feet in the footprints of Christ. In the case of a man who is learned and well read in the Scriptures, one should be careful not to submit him to a catechism of the elementary kind; he should be told that he knows, of course, this thing or that—without assuming towards him a dogmatic attitude, but carefully leading him back over the books he has read; stressing the importance of the canonical Scriptures, and of the best commentaries, insisting upon the profundity and simplicity of the Scriptures, which are suitable to all men; observing the treatment of various commentators, of greater or less eloquence or elegance, and for that very reason adapted to intellects which are prouder and therefore not so strong. If he has read the works of heretical writers, he should be enlightened and led back to the authority of the universal Church. With such a man one must use tact and try not to bruise his self-esteem.

Suppose now that the catechist has to deal with an ordinary educated man. He will take an early opportunity of recommending him to cultivate the virtue of humility, and of warning him not to be discouraged by the apparent simplicity of the Scriptures; he must learn to appreciate the mystery concealed beneath the cloak of allegory, he must learn to attach more importance to truth than to its form of expression; he must not be shocked at the barbarisms and solecisms with which certain bishops and ecclesiastical writers ornament their style. As regards the sacrament which they are about to receive, one will find that cultivated intellects will require merely a brief account, whereas, with the

less educated, it will be necessary to give more explanations and explanatory comparisons.

It is not easy for the catechist always to be cheerful, for he is discouraged by the monotony of his task, by the listlessness of the convert, by overwork, and by the very fruitlessness of his efforts. In this matter, nothing is of power comparable to the example of Christ who deigned to become a slave for our sake, and who has placed Himself within reach of all. He shows towards us the tenderness of a nurse or a mother; He compares Himself to the hen, sheltering her chickens beneath her wing. Set-backs ought not to make us downhearted: they are experiments which bear fruit, if we seek God alone. The most tiresome repetitions offer charm when they are inspired by love; a doctrine takes on a new interest when one sees it taking root in souls that are dear, just as, when we display to a friend the delights of a scene perfectly well known to us, we feel that we are beholding it again for the first time. When it becomes a matter of raising souls to the heights of the knowledge of God Himself—what an unfailing source of holy joy there is for the catechist! It is, without doubt, very hard when he feels that he is addressing an unresponsive listener; but on such an occasion he must devise some plan to overcome the difficulty; he should encourage, ask questions, and try to discover the candidate's special needs in order to adapt himself to them. If all these efforts prove in vain, he will be obliged to resign himself to such a state of affairs and limit himself to the really essential points: the unity of the Church, temptation, and the fear of divine judgment; he will speak to God for the catechumen, rather than speaking to the catechumen of God. If the catechumen displays symptoms of weariness or boredom, the instructor should refresh him by telling some amusing story, or rivet his attention by striking

his imagination with an unexpected development of his argument. Sometimes making him sit down will prove sufficient. Experience shows that the listener's strength ought not to be taxed too heavily by excessive length of the instruction. But it may happen that the catechist is in a bad temper; perhaps his day's arrangements have been upset and it is with a bad grace that he gives his instruction. In order to recover his tranquillity, he ought to remember that the best order of things is the order which is in accordance with God's will, and that outside this there can be nothing but disorder. If he really loves his neighbour, he will be only too glad to be able to extend to him the application of the merits of Christ's precious Blood and he will contrive to find words full of ardour to touch the catechumen's heart. Last of all, he must remind himself, over and over again, that the waters of spiritual loving-kindness extinguish the flames of concupiscence, and that in working for the salvation of his neighbour he is working out his own salvation.

In addition to all these instructions, Deogratias asked for a model catechism. Before complying with his request, Augustine reminds him that the golden rule is to adapt oneself to one's listener. Different people have different needs; you do not speak to one man as you do to a crowd—and even crowds differ very largely from one another. The form of the discourse depends upon the nature of the audience. By different sorts of converts Augustine feels himself moved in different ways. The convert may be a refined man or one of unresponsive nature; a fellow countryman or a foreigner, a rich man or a poor one, an ordinary person or somebody of high rank, a candidate from this or that nation, or of such or such an age, of this or that sex, an adept of this school of thought or that, a victim of one popular error or another.

Each affects Augustine in a different and quite special manner. To all, the same charity is due, but the same treatment is not suitable for all. Some people charity should bring to a new birth in Christ; others, it should sympathize with; some are to be edified by it, others gently persuaded; towards some charity should stoop, while rising towards others. This Christian charity is now caressing, now serious and deep in thought; it is never malevolent, but always maternal. The person who has had no experience of the pastoral mission and who sees the multitude eagerly drinking in the words of Augustine, says to himself that the bishop is a happy man. But may God—to whom ascend Augustine's lamentations—may He deign to regard his anguish, and efforts, and to pardon him his sins! If Deogratias hopes to learn something from him, he must come and watch him at work; reading his instructions is not enough.

However, let us suppose that we have a candidate presenting himself for entry into the Christian life, a man, say, of moderate education, not an ignorant rustic but a city-dweller of a certain culture, like so many of the Carthaginians. If asked whether he is in quest of advantages in this life or of peace in eternity he replies that it is the latter which he seeks. This is, roughly, how the catechist should speak to him:

"Let us give glory to God, brother. I congratulate you upon deciding for such a wise course. Here below, men pine for peace and security, but they do not find them because they are blinded by their own passions. It is not riches, nor health, nor the honours of an age which give true repose and genuine happiness, to possess which a man must go beyond these things and fix his hopes in the word of the Lord who of all alone remains for all eternity. Still less are peace and contentment to be sought in carousing and debauchery,

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at the theatre or in the arena, where the eye of the spectator gloats over the shedding of blood. True repose is to be found on earth only in the security of a pure conscience—the earnest of everlasting bliss. Some people embrace Christianity for temporal interests; they wish to please those in power, or they desire to avoid some disgrace. No guarantee of stability is forthcoming from such people; like straw upon the Church's threshing-floor they will be gathered up and cast into the fire at the Last Judgment. Others, slightly better than these, have already the fear of God in their hearts, but they only seek for earthly profit in entering His Church and will fall at the first temptation. The only real Christian is the man who is converted because he wishes to avoid the flames of Hell and to reign with Christ for all eternity. On his guard against all temptations he will succeed by degrees in freeing himself from fear and serving God through love alone. God created the world in six days and on the seventh He rested—not to recruit His strength, for He knows not fatigue, but to show forth the economy of His work and to unfold before us the immense perspective of the eternal repose which He desires to enjoy with the Saints. The all-powerful God made all things good. He made man to His own image and likeness, to rule over creation and to know its Creator. He gave man an auxiliary, namely woman, who existed before sin, not for the satisfaction of a sensible attraction, but for the glory of man (who was to be her model and guide)—as he himself was created for the glory of God. Having placed man and woman in a paradise of delights God gave them one commandment. He well knew that this commandment would be broken, nevertheless He willed the creation of man as He did that of the wild beasts; man, even man the sinner, is superior to the beast. The command-

ment was intended to be the basis of the vindicating justice meted out by God towards guilty mankind, so that God might be glorified even in the very fall of man; and all the more because from the same race were to spring the saints who should be numbered with the angelic choirs. God knows how to turn to His greater glory the desertion of the sinner; the devil and sinful man, fallen from rank by reason of their offences, regain it by chastisement. Whosoever impenitently follows the devil will finally be drawn along to his ruin, but whoever humbles himself before God is enabled by His grace to triumph over Satan and to share in an eternal reward. It matters little that the straw of the damned exceeds in bulk the grain of the elect. The entire world is divided into two great cities, and they are the city of evil and the city of good; for the present these two are intermingled, but remain distinct from one another by their tendencies; at the Last Judgment they will be for ever separated. On one hand there will be the proud and mighty, cast down into the abyss with the spirits who have presented them with their yoke of pride; on the other, those spirits and men who have sought the glory of God with piety and humility. But God shows mercy to the sinner who wanders far from the path of virtue; He awaits his repentance and atonement. By exterminating the human race at the Deluge, He showed that He can be relentless; by sparing repentant Ninevah He showed that He is able to forgive. For a time He allows to evil a free hand, to work impiety of every kind, to prostitute by idolatry the homage due to the Creator alone, paying it to the devil and to the works of human hands. Never have they just gone astray, those pious worshippers of God and conquerors of the devil, citizens of the holy city, healed by the humility of God's only-begotten Son, by that humility which prophets had foretold

and which was shown forth in His coming. Such was Abraham, father of the Chosen People, the type of Christ's Church. Such were the ancient patriarchs and prophets, members of that Church by anticipation. In Egypt the Chosen People knew harsh slavery and had recourse to God for deliverance; and God raised up Moses, a son of this people, to lead his brethren out of Egypt, and their enemies were engulfed in the Red Sea. The miracle of the Red Sea, as a type, is a repetition of the Deluge; the rod of Moses typifies the mystery of the Cross. The paschal lamb which was sacrificed at the time of the exodus is a more definite figure of the passion of Christ, the symbol of which to-day distinguishes the brow of Christians. For forty years God's people wandered in the desert; there they received the Tables of the Law, written by the Hand of God—that is, by the power of the Holy Spirit. The many noticeable signs which distinguished the yoke of the Jews' servitude announced the spiritual mystery of Christ and His Church. Finally, the Chosen People reached the promised land, where they were to exercise a temporal power in accordance with their desires. There they founded Jerusalem, the city of God and symbol of the heavenly Jerusalem whose Hebrew name means "Vision of Peace." The inhabitants of the heavenly Jerusalem consist of all holy men, past, present, or to come, and of all the angels who obey God in the heights of Heaven. The Lord of this city is Jesus Christ, the Word of God and Lord of angels, who has taken to Himself a human body. The holy Books are full of figures or types of Christ; among them one of the most outstanding is David, the ancestor, according to the flesh, of Him who is God, the Blessed One of the Ages. The city of God was held captive in Babylon, the city of evil and confusion; there the Chosen People were urged by God to pray for those who held them in

bondage; they continued to bear children, to build their dwellings, to plant gardens and vineyards. This captivity symbolized the future condition of the Church among the kingdoms of this world, the condition of Christ Himself, who set us an example of humility by paying the tax upon His own person. In the same way, faithful Christians ought to obey their temporal masters, as St. Paul teaches, and they should pray that their masters may give peace to the Church. After the predicted period of seventy years, Jerusalem and the temple arose from their ruins—but the Jews only enjoyed a very unstable kind of peace. Conquered by the Romans and reduced to the status of vassals, they learnt, through many tribulations, that the Liberator whom the Prophets had announced was not yet come. They yearned for a temporal one, but God was going to send them a spiritual Liberator.

"In the sixth age of the world, God sent His only Son—not deprived of His divinity, but clad in our humanity, to live among men and to suffer death at their hands. In Him was revealed the New Testament of the eternal heritage, which was to renew man by grace and guide him to the life of the Spirit. This New Testament was already present in mystic form in the Old Testament; a small number of seers, patriarchs and prophets (unrecognized saints), were able to pierce the veil of the Old Testament, but the multitude of men lived according to the flesh, knowing only the good things of this world. Christ, by His example, taught men to despise these things; He taught them to bear patiently the evils of this life in order to acquire the things of real worth, which are in Heaven. Born of a virgin who was espoused to a working-man, He thus condemned the pride of birth. By being born in an obscure little town, He silently reproved those who glorify the life of great cities. His voluntary poverty was a reproach to the wealthy. He whose

eternal kingdom is proclaimed by every creature, refused to allow Himself to be made a king. Creator of all food and drink, the Spiritual Bread and Fount of refreshing waters—He suffered hunger and thirst. He sat down by the wayside, tired out by walking—yet He was the very Path to Heaven. The Christ who made the dumb to speak and the deaf to hear remained mute before His insulters. He had loosened the limbs of paralytics, but His own limbs He allowed to be bound; He had driven forth from human bodies all the scourges of infirmity, nevertheless He suffered scourging at the pillar. He put an end to our misfortunes but Himself suffered death upon the Cross—He who called the dead to life. He rose again never more to die and He promises us another life beyond death. After a period of forty days employed in fortifying the faith of His disciples, He ascended to Heaven before their eyes. Fifty days after His Resurrection He sent down the Holy Ghost to infuse charity into their hearts and to make them ready to bear without fatigue—with joy even—the burden of the Law. Ten commandments were given to the Jews of old; these He reduced to two. To confirm His teaching the Holy Spirit descended on the day of Pentecost in the form of parted tongues as it were of fire. On that day, the Apostles began boldly to preach Christ crucified, and the power to work miracles was in them so that Peter's very shadow restored the dead to life. These marvels aroused the anger of the Jews who had crucified Christ either by reason of hatred or because of their ignorance; and the forces of persecution were unchained against the Apostles. Nevertheless thousands of Jews were converted, for these had understood, in the light of Christ's death and resurrection, that the promised Kingdom was not of this world. Suppressing the earth-bound desires of the old man, and burning with desire for a new

life, they sold their goods in order to lay the price at the feet of the Apostles, or distribute it to the needy. They lived in brotherly accord, not possessing anything of themselves, and having but one heart and one soul in God. In their turn they became the victims of persecution, for God wished to spread His Gospel by the very fact of their being scattered over the earth. Numbered among the most bitter persecutors of the Christians was Paul; later when he himself had been won over to the faith and had become the Apostle of the Gentiles, he was to suffer for the name of Christ more than he had formerly done against that name. He founded the Church among the Gentiles, uniting them to the churches converted from Judaism in the bonds of charity. The mystic Vine extended its branches over the world, and spread more rapidly because it was copiously watered with the blood of martyrs. Then there rose up heresies and schisms, which cut from the trunk the sterile branches. All these things had been predicted. Miracles had been necessary to strengthen the faith of the first Christians; for the new generation, the great sign was in the accomplishment of the prophecies, especially of the prophecies concerning the persecution of the Church. But no earthly joy is to be compared with the joy of eternal life, no temporal pain with the eternal torments of the damned. Supported by the testimony of the Scriptures, the Christian withstands the onslaughts of unbelievers who laugh at the doctrine of the resurrection of the body. The Power which first created man's body is capable of restoring it either for glorious incorruptibility or for its merited term of torture. An unshakable faith and reproachless conduct preserve a man against that endless death which is torment for all eternity; they give him the right to aspire towards the life of the Blessed, where activity is unwearying, and repose is never inertia; where the

Saints find in God their whole delight, and with the Angels enjoy the divine Trinity in a contemplation which is pure and ardent and silent. Such a faith withstands all the assaults of the devil and his minions—whether they be infidels, heretics or schismatics, Jews or unworthy Christians who live provisionally within the Church, like straw mingled with the grain. Among the latter, many, thanks to the patience of Providence, become repentant and are saved. It is none the less true that the presence within the Church of these profane men dishonours and scandalizes Christians; if a candidate desires to imitate them he would be better advised not to endeavour to enter the Church, for he will bring down upon himself damnation. He must follow those whose lives are a good example. Can any form of human society be more delightful than that which has God as its great uniting link? Follow the example of true Christians, but do not put your hope even in them; put it rather in God alone who never changes. A man has, perhaps, suffered for his faith: so much the better, for his reward in Heaven will be all the greater. But those who fall before temptation lose even the merit which they have acquired. We must be humble before God. He will not permit us to be tempted beyond our strength."

Such are the outlines of the Catechism which Augustine sketches out for Deogratias. It now remains to question the catechumen. If he replies that he believes and wishes to live according to this belief, he should be signed with the sign of the Cross, and treated as the custom of the Church requires. If the above discourse appears rather long it may be abridged to meet the needs of the case; it will hardly be necessary to make it longer for any candidate. If it is necessary to do the thing very hastily, everything can be explained in very few words. For example, one could address the catechumen as follows:

"Indeed, brother, the happiness that is promised to the Saints in glory is a great and true happiness. All things of earth pass away—all the pride of the age, all its delights and refinements will perish, and with them the human beings who have loved them. This ruin is our eternal chastisement. But God in His mercy desired to deliver men from it—at least, those men who would not be enemies to themselves and who would not withstand the clemency of their Creator. He therefore sent His only Son, His Word, co-equal with Himself, through whom He made all things. Retaining His divinity, without leaving the Father, without undergoing any change, the Son took to Himself our human nature and appeared before the eyes of men, clothed in mortal flesh. He came to the world thus so that, as through the first man, Adam, death entered into the human race because Adam participated in his wife's sin of disobedience, in like manner, through a Man, who is also God and the Son of God, Jesus Christ, all our sins might be washed away and all those who believed in Him might possess eternal life.

"All the things which you see being realized to-day in God's Church and in the name of Christ throughout the whole world have been predicted centuries ago. What we read, we now see coming to pass; thereupon reposes the edifice of our faith. In days gone by, the Deluge covered all the earth to destroy sinners; those who escaped in the Ark symbolized the Church which was to come later, and now floats upon the ocean of the ages, preserved upon the waters of the wood of Christ's Cross. It was foretold to a man named Abraham, a faithful servant of God, that of him would be born a people which would adore the only true God, amid the idolatry of all other nations. All that was predicted about this people has come to pass. To this same people was prophesied the coming of Christ

the King of all Saints, who was to be born of the race of Abraham according to the flesh, made incarnate in order that all who should imitate Abraham's faith in God, might become His Son's. And so it came to pass. Christ was born of the Virgin Mary, a descendant of the race of Abraham. It had been foretold by the prophets that Christ would be crucified by that very Jewish race of which, according to the flesh, He was a member. And so it happened. It had been prophesied that He would rise again from the dead, and He rose again. In accordance with the prophecies He ascended into Heaven, whence He sent down upon His disciples the Holy Spirit. It was predicted, not only by the prophets but also by the Lord Jesus Himself, that His Church would extend over all the earth, propagated by the martyrdom and sufferings of the Saints; that was prophesied at a time when His Name was still unknown to the Gentiles, and was held up to derision by many of the Jews who did know it. And yet, by the wonderful miracles which He worked, either personally or through His servants, by preaching and by faith, we to-day behold the prophecy fulfilled and the very kings of the earth, formerly persecutors of the Christians, are now submissive to Christ's Name. Again it was prophesied that the Church would overcome heretics and schismatics who were seeking their own ends while pretending to work for her glory. That again has come to pass as it was foretold.

"Will the things that are still unfulfilled remain for ever so? No, for the fulfilment of the first prophecies is an earnest of the accomplishment of the others, whatever may be the tribulations reserved for the just. The Last Judgment will separate the wicked from the just at the resurrection of the dead; and with the wicked, not only those who are outside the Church, but also the

straw of the Church's harvest, which she will suffer in patience to remain—until the supreme winnowing, when it will be set aside to be consumed by fire. And those who laugh at the doctrine of resurrection, thinking that flesh which has fallen into corruption can no longer be capable of resurrection, will rise again covered with their flesh to suffer eternal punishment. God will prove that, having given to these bodies their being, He is able to restore them to their original state in an instant of time. All the faithful who are to reign with Christ will arise, not only with the same bodies, but also with their bodies made incorrupt as the angels. Equal now to the angels, according to the word of our Lord Himself, they will praise Him unwearyingly and without ceasing, living always in Him and by Him, with joy and happiness that man is powerless to describe or even to conceive.

"Hold fast therefore this belief, and beware of temptation; for the devil seeks to draw men down with him in his ruin. Do not let this enemy lead you astray through the agency either of those outside the Church, such as pagans, Jews and heretics, or of those who, within the very bosom of the Catholic Church, lead bad lives, indulging to excess in the pleasures of the table or of speech, who are impure and given up to seeking after vain or wicked matters and spectacles, diabolical aid and oracles, the pomp and arrogance of greed and pride, or such professions as are condemned and punished by the law. Beware of imitating such men; associate with Christians of good life, of whom you will easily find many if you yourself resemble them. In company with them, honour and love God for His own sake, for He is to be our whole reward in the life where we shall enjoy together His goodness and His beauty. God is to be loved, not as we love a visible object, but rather as we love wisdom, truth, holiness, justice, charity and

similar blessings; and these, not as they are found in imperfect men, but as they exist at the very Fount of incorruptible and immutable Wisdom. Unite yourself in friendship with those whom you see ardent in the pursuit of these virtues, so that Christ who was made man to mediate between God and men, may reconcile you with His heavenly Father. Do not believe that the wicked are to enter the Kingdom of Heaven even if they have succeeded in crossing the threshold of the Church, from which they shall be cast forth in due time unless they amend their lives. Imitate the virtuous, suffer evil-doers, and love all men; for you know not what the wicked man will have become to-morrow. Do not love the sin of sinners but their souls, so that they may repent of their misdeeds. We are commanded to love not only God, but also our neighbour: upon these two great precepts depend all the Law and the prophecies. No man can fulfil the Law unless he receives the gift of the Holy Spirit, who is equal to the Father and to the Son; the Trinity is God, in whom we must place all hope; because no man, whoever he be, is worthy of it. For He in whom we are justified is infinitely above those with whom we are justified. The devil's temptations come not only through desire, but also through fears of attack, of pain, even of death. The Christian's reward is increased by all that he suffers staunchly for Christ's Name in the hope of gaining eternal life; but if he falls into the snares of the devil, he will be condemned with him. Our Lord will accept the intercession of pious humility and works of mercy, and He will not permit that His servants be tempted beyond their strength."[1]

From this rapid glance at Augustine's Catechism, we receive one impression which is outstanding. The bishop (Augustine had occupied the see of Hippo for three or four years already) moves in the realms

of pastoral theology with the ease of a master—a facility due to his penetration and firmness. He knows thoroughly the serious responsibilities of the catechist, and perfectly realizes the points which must of necessity be driven home. In addition he has a fine perception of the fact that an individual human soul, which more or less clearly hears the call of God, may perhaps still be in violent conflict with the remains of pagan prejudices or with the rebellion of the lower nature. His delicate psychological instinct warns him not to lay too violent a hand upon the infinitely complex soul or upon hidden wounds the existence of which he is able to suspect.

Nothing is less rigid, less mathematically fixed than this converter's manual. The "ignorant ones" for whose benefit it is ultimately intended, are ignorant only in regard to Christian doctrine. In general culture they may be very refined men and much superior to those whose mission it is to lead them into the Church. The first thing required for a good catechism is this: do not present the doctrines of Christianity like a formula, in the same way to everyone, without making distinctions between candidates; adapt yourself to the varying needs of the catechumens—individual needs if dealing with an individual, collective needs if the audience is a mixed one. Augustine is so insistent upon this point that he considers it in every possible light before finally making up his mind to give Deogratias what the deacon had chiefly asked him for, namely a model catechism suitable for general needs. But even then, the good bishop cannot make up his mind to satisfy him all at once, and he distinguishes at least two different cases: the case in which one is able to cover all the ground desirable, and that in which one must limit oneself to essentials.

His valuable personal experience—a double one, since it is that of a pagan as well as that of a

Christian—provides him with the elements of an ample introduction to Christian doctrine. This introduction forms the most original part of the work.

He begins with his own experience as a catechist; that was the most natural way of starting, and the one most likely to interest Deogratias. The difficulties encountered by the Carthaginian deacon do not astonish Augustine, for he himself has known the anguish of zeal, the disheartening and discouragements of a task that is often fruitless; he has grown weary of hearing himself speak so very imperfectly, as he says with simplicity: *Nam et mihi fere semper sermo meus displicuit.* (For I am scarcely ever pleased with my own words.) But he is equally well aware that the opinion of his audience is different, and he has frequently experienced the pleasant surprise of beholding them moved by an address which to them seemed quite insipid. He is convinced that in such an important work the catechist should assume a generously optimistic attitude, for man is here placing himself as an instrument in the hands of God, and God Himself exercises His power and goodness on behalf of His human instrument. So the instructor will try diligently to capture that communicative spirit of joy—*hilaritas*—which will be to him a power of strength and a merit also. A merit, because he will thus enter into the benevolent intention of Providence, and a strength, because he will find himself enabled by this means to awaken responsive echoes in the hearts of his listeners.

The great secret is to know how to love. If the Incarnation is, in the most excellent degree, the mystery of God's love for man, how can one preach it efficaciously without having love in one's own heart? This love should appear in the method of developing the subject, in the words of the speaker and in the care with which he adapts himself to his

hearer in language that is simple, concrete and full of imagery. God Himself has given us this example; He adapted His revelation to man's needs by speaking to him through the figures and symbols of the Old Testament; the reality behind these symbols is found in the New Testament. *In Veteri Testamento est occultatio Novi, in Novo Testamento est manifestatio Veteris.* ("In the Old Testament the New lies hidden; in the New Testament the Old is made manifest.") The work of conversion is the accomplishment of the Divine plan in an individual soul. The convert must respond to the Divine action, by overturning in his heart the obstacles of pride and hatred, imitating the love and humility of God made man.

Augustine's methods of dealing with catechumens reveal also the influence of his own experience as a convert; he has known, and therefore understands the inner struggles of the conscience. He knows what complexities a still impenitent heart finds in pride of spirit, what skilful management learned men need, and how important it is for the catechist to efface his own personality so that God may act. And therefore he recommends the catechist not to pose as a man of learning to those who already have certain pretensions to learning. The conquest of a soul requires much more skill than that, and sometimes it demands no little sacrifice; but then, it must be considered that the stake is a high one. The necessities of this soul, redeemed by Christ's precious Blood, are quite great enough to put aside all other considerations, and to kindle ardent words upon the lips of the catechist so that he may fortify the catechumen against scandals and inspire him with a keen desire for his own salvation.

Deogratias had asked for a model catechism; in addition to that he received many precious counsels. Finally, when Augustine is about to draw up the catechism, he decides to give, not one pattern, but

two. Of these, the first is a fairly comprehensive outline (of which the main points have already been given above), and the other, translated here in full, is a more brief summary.

The chief difference between the two is the suppression, in the second form, of the historical portion taken from the Old Testament. With a convert who is not very enlightened, or whose case is urgent, the historical account may be omitted and the essential truths taken without preliminary. Eternal salvation, sin which is the obstacle to it; man's fall in the person of Adam; our Redemption by Jesus Christ; the Church as the fulfilment of prophecy in the Old and New Testaments; the trial of man on earth; the Last Judgment, which will follow the resurrection of the body, damning the wicked to the fires of Hell and rewarding the good with eternal bliss in Heaven with God; the care which must be taken to avoid sin; the Divine Trinity, hope of every Christian—these are the essential points of an elementary catechism. Such was Augustine's system of teaching, and such is the form of catechism which the Church continues still to use for her converts.

Later in his life, when Deogratias became a priest at Carthage, he still liked to consult Augustine upon points of difficulty. There still exists a letter written by Augustine, in which he deals with six points of Sacred Scripture that the Carthaginian priest had submitted to him.[1] They were not Deogratias's personal difficulties, but objections and sneers of a pagan or a sceptic who made a point of going to the writings of Porphyry and others to find weapons against the Christian religion. Augustine knew this man only too well; he had already had occasion to write to him and had received no reply. With his usual tact, he avoids coming into open conflict with him, and asks Deogratias not to let

[1] Ep., cii, P.L. xxxiii, 370-386.

his name be connected with the affair; but he does not want to refuse Deogratias the elements of a solution that the latter could very well have managed to work out for himself. Brought forward by the young priest the solution will probably receive a better welcome from the questioner, whose vanity must not be wounded unnecessarily. For even yet Augustine has not given up hope of obtaining the conversion of this enemy of the Faith. The bishop suspects him of smarting under his defeat in the earlier argument, and treats him as a catechumen in spite of himself. For that reason he slips into the last page this penetrating remark and friendly advice: "Why is he not already a Christian? If he is waiting to clear up all his doubts on Holy Scripture before doing so, he will never clear them all up, and death will find him still searching for solutions. He can be excused for bringing forward serious problems, such as the resurrection of the body, or the design of Providence in willing that Christ should be born at such a date rather than at any other. But many other lesser problems can wait; a Christian will always find time to think over them in all humility, without injury to his faith, or he will simply give up all attempt at solving them."

Augustine never let slip any opportunity of exercising the high vocation of catechist.

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